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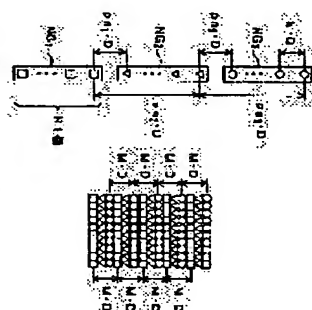
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(54) DEVICE AND METHOD FOR PRINTING USING A PLURALITY OF NOZZLE GROUPS AND RECORDING MEDIUM CONTAINING PROGRAM FOR OPERATING THEM RECORDED THEREIN

(57)Abstract:

PROBLEM TO BE SOLVED: To form a printing image having high quality by using a print head having multiple dot forming elements and to perform interlaced printing even when a pitch of the dot forming elements is varied in the middle of arrangement thereof.

SOLUTION: A print head 2 comprises a plurality of nozzle groups 2a, 2b which are provided at a predetermined distance (pn) therebetween in a sub-scanning direction. A plurality of nozzles of each of the nozzle groups 2a, 2b are arranged in the sub-scanning direction with a nozzle pitch (k). In a first printing method wherein each of the nozzle groups records



different raster, the distance (pn) between groups is set a value different from the pitch (k) and the number of times S of the scanning and the pitch (k) are determined such that each of N/(M.S) and k/M is a prime number with the other. Then, the sub-scanning with a constant pitch of N/S dot is executed. In a second printing method wherein each raster is recorded by the plurality of nozzle groups, the values N, M, S and k are determined such that each of N/(M.S) and k is a prime number with other, then the sub-scanning with a constant pitch of N/(M.S) dot is executed.

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CLAIMS

[Claim 6)]

[Claim 1)] It is the airline printer which prints by forming a dot in the printing field on a printing medium. The print head, said print head and the 1st scan mechanical component which is at least one side of said printing record medium to the 1st scanning direction. The 2nd scan mechanical component which moves at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to the 2nd scanning direction where said 1st scanning direction intersects perpendicularly. The print head mechanical component which forms a dot on said printing record medium by driving said print head based on a printing image data. A preparation and said print head are equipped with the dot formative element of N individual (N is four or more integers), the minimum element pitch along said 2nd scanning direction between two adjoining dot formative elements in said print head -- k-D (k -- an integer --) D is a dot pitch equivalent to print resolution, and the dot formative element of said N individual is classified into M dot formative element groups (M and N/M are two or more integers, respectively) containing the dot formative element of a N/M individual, respectively. As for the dot formative element group of the i-th in said M dot formative element groups (i is 1 -- (M-1) an integer), and eye watch (i+1), only between-groups pitch pgi and D (integer for which pgi differs from said k) have shifted to said 2nd scanning direction. Said 2nd scan mechanical component conveys at least said one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D twice [more than] the fixed feed per revolution of said. Said the 1st and 2nd scan mechanical components and said print head mechanical components So that said M dot formative element groups may have the same location pattern which can be dot formed. And the airline printer which drives said print head and said printing record medium so that formation of a dot may be attained in all the dot locations in said printing field by shifting mutually said each location pattern of said M dot formative element groups which can be dot formed.

[Claim 2)] It is an airline printer with possible the dot formative element group which is an airline printer according to claim 1, and adjoins vacating a gap, and being separated along said 2nd scanning direction, and the dot formative element of said N/M individual of each dot formative element group forming the N/M same dot located in a line with about 1 train along said 2nd scanning direction by said minimum element pitch k-D in each scan along said 1st scanning direction.

[Claim 3)] It is the airline printer which consists of two or more dot lines of said 1st scanning direction where it is an airline printer according to claim 2, and said each same pattern of said M dot formative element groups was periodically arranged in the pitch of M dots.

[Claim 4)] Are an airline printer according to claim 3, and only between-groups distance pni and D (pni is an integer) are separated between said i-th dot formative element groups of eye watch (i+1). Said pni Value pni -- pni(s) from the 1st to the i-th It is set up so that the value from which the value of too much (M-1) individual which *(ked) the accumulation value (sigmapni) with the number M of dot formative element groups differs mutually [1 -- (M-1)] may be taken. When carrying out the scan of said 1st scanning direction S times (S is a positive integer and M-S is the factor of N) and forming the dot line of said 1st scanning direction, It is the airline printer with which said N, M, S, and k are chosen so that N/(M-S) and k/M may become the relation of

relatively prime, and said 2nd scan mechanical component conveys at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D N/S twice the feed per revolution of said.

[Claim 5)] It is the airline printer which it is an airline printer according to claim 4, and said print head is formed by only said between-groups distance pni's and D's making said 2nd scanning direction estrange M dot formative element units which have the dot formative element of a N/M individual, respectively, and arranging them in it, and has the pitch with the dot formative element of said N/M individual of each dot formative element unit equal to said minimum element pitch k-D to said 2nd scanning direction.

[Claim 6)] It is the airline printer currently formed when it is an airline printer according to claim 5, and said each dot formative element unit makes said 1st scanning direction estrange the even-dot formative element train and odd-dot formative element train by which two or more dot formative elements were formed in said 2nd scanning direction by twice as many element pitch 2 k-D as said minimum element pitch k-D, respectively and arranges them.

[Claim 7)] Said 1st scan mechanical component is an airline printer which drives at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 1st scanning direction with the 1st [are an airline printer according to claim 4, and corresponding to said count S of a scan] scanning direction rate.

[Claim 8)] the airline printer with which it is an airline printer according to claim 2, and said each same pattern of said M dot formative element groups consists of two or more dots periodically arranged in the pitch of M dot on each dot line of said 1st scanning direction.

[Claim 9)] Are an airline printer according to claim 8, and only between-groups distance pni and D (pni is an integer) are separated between said i-th dot formative element groups of eye watch (i+1). Said pni When it is set as a different integral value from k, the scan of said 1st scanning direction is carried out M S times (S is a positive integer and M-S is the factor of N) and the dot line of said 1st scanning direction is formed. It is the airline printer with which said N, M, S, and k are chosen so that N/(M-S) and k may become the relation of relatively prime, and said 2nd scan mechanical component conveys at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D N/(M-S) twice the feed per revolution of said.

[Claim 10)] It is the airline printer which it is an airline printer according to claim 9, and said print head is formed by only said between-groups distance pni's and D's making said 2nd scanning direction estrange M dot formative element units which have the dot formative element of a N/M individual, respectively, and arranging them in it, and has the pitch with the dot formative element of said N/M individual of each dot formative element unit equal to said minimum element pitch k-D to said 2nd scanning direction.

[Claim 11)] It is the airline printer currently formed when it is an airline printer according to claim 10, and said each dot formative element unit makes said 1st scanning direction estrange the even-dot formative element train and odd-dot formative element train by which two or more dot formative elements were formed in said 2nd scanning direction by twice as many element pitch 2 k-D as said minimum element pitch k-D, respectively and arranges them.

[Claim 12)] The airline printer with which said M dot formative element groups are formed by stoping some dot formative elements among two or more dot formative elements which are airline printers according to claim 9, and were arranged in said 2nd scanning direction by said minimum element pitch k-D in said print head.

[Claim 13)] Said 1st scan mechanical component is an airline printer which drives at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 1st scanning direction with the 1st [are an airline printer according to claim 9, and corresponding to said count M-S of a scan] scanning direction rate.

[Claim 14)] It is an airline printer according to claim 1. The dot formative element of said N individual While being classified into the block of BN individual (integer with BN equal to N/M) which contains M dot formative elements, respectively and being mutually separated only from interblock distance pb-D (pb is the positive integer of k and an inequality) of the adjoining block Said M dot formative element groups are formed of the corresponding dot formative element in

each block. Said M dot formative elements in said each block. It is possible to form the M same dots located in a line with about 1 train along said 2nd scanning direction by said minimum element pitch k-D in each scan along said 1st scanning direction. When carrying out the scan of said 1st scanning direction M,S times (S is a positive integer) and forming the dot line of said 1st scanning direction, Said N, M, S, k, and pb are chosen so that $N/(M-S)$ and $(k \text{ and } (M-1) \div \text{tpb})$ may become the relation of relatively prime. Said 2nd scan mechanical component. The airline printer which conveys at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D $N/(M-S)$ twice the feed per revolution of said.

[Claim 15] It is the airline printer which it is an airline printer according to claim 14, and said print head is formed by only said block distance pb-D's making said 2nd scanning direction estrange the dot formative element unit of BN individual which has M dot formative elements, respectively, and arranging it in it, and has the pitch with said M dot formative elements of each dot formative element unit equal to said minimum element pitch k-D to said 2nd scanning direction.

[Claim 16] It is the airline printer currently formed when it is an airline printer according to claim 15 and said each dot formative element unit makes said 1st scanning direction estrange the dot formative elements were formed in said 2nd scanning direction by twice as many element pitch 2 k-D as said minimum element pitch k-D, respectively and arranges them.

[Claim 17] The airline printer with which the block of said BN individual is formed by stopping some dot formative elements among two or more dot formative elements which are airline printers according to claim 14, and were arranged in said 2nd scanning direction by said minimum element pitch k-D in said print head.

[Claim 18] Said 1st scan mechanical component is an airline printer which drives at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 1st scanning direction with the 1st [are an airline printer according to claim 14, and corresponding to said count M-S of a scan] scanning direction rate.

[Claim 19] While forming a dot in the printing field on said printing record medium, moving at least one side of the print head and a printing record medium to the 1st scanning direction. It is the printing approach which prints using the airline printer moved to the 2nd scanning direction where said 1st scanning direction intersects perpendicularly at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium. Said print head is equipped with the dot formative element of N individual (N is four or more integers), the minimum element pitch along said 2nd scanning direction between two adjoining dot formative elements in said print head — k-D (k — an integer —) D is a dot pitch equivalent to print resolution, and the dot formative element of said N individual is classified into M dot formative element groups (M and N/M are two or more integers, respectively) containing the dot formative element of a N/M individual, respectively. As for the dot formative element group of the i-th in said M dot formative element groups (i is 1 — (M-1) an integer), and eye watch $(i+1)$, only between-groups pitch pgi and D (integer for which pgi is from said k) have shifted to said 2nd scanning direction. So that at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium may be conveyed to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D twice [more than] the fixed feed per revolution of said and said M dot formative element groups may have the same location pattern which can be dot formed. And the printing approach of driving said print head and said printing record medium so that formation of a dot may be attained in all the dot locations in said printing field by shifting mutually said each location pattern of said M dot formative element groups which can be dot formed.

[Claim 20] It is the printing approach with possible the dot formative element group which is the printing approach according to claim 19, and adjoins vacating a gap, and being separated along said 2nd scanning direction, and said N/M dot formative element of each dot formative element group forming the dot of the same N/M individual located in a line with about 1 train along said 2nd scanning direction by said minimum element pitch k-D in each scan along said 1st scanning direction.

[Claim 21] It is the printing approach which consists of two or more dot lines of said 1st scanning direction where it is the printing approach according to claim 20, and said each same

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pattern of said M dot formative element groups was periodically arranged in the pitch of M dots. [Claim 22] Are the printing approach according to claim 21, and only between-groups distance pni and D (pni is an integer) are separated between said i-th dot formative element groups of eye watch $(i+1)$. Said pni Value pni — pni(S) from the 1st to the i-th it is set up so that the value from which the value of too much (M-1) individual which $*k \div (M-1)$] may be taken. When (signpni) with the number M of nozzle groups differs mutually [$i - (M-1)$] may be taken. When carrying out the scan of said 1st scanning direction S times (S is a positive integer and M-S is the factor of N) and forming the dot line of said 1st scanning direction. The printing approach of choosing said N, M, S, and k so that $N/(M-S)$ and k/M may become the relation of relatively prime, and conveying at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D N/S twice the feed per revolution of said.

[Claim 23] The printing approach of being the printing approach according to claim 22, and driving at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 1st scanning direction with the 1st [according to said count S of a scan] scanning direction rate.

[Claim 24] The printing approach by which it is the printing approach according to claim 20, and said each same pattern of said M dot formative element groups consists of two or more dots periodically arranged in the pitch of M dot on each dot line of said 1st scanning direction.

[Claim 25] When it is the printing approach according to claim 24, the scan of said 1st scanning direction is carried out M,S times (S is a positive integer and M-S is the factor of N) and the dot line of said 1st scanning direction is formed. The printing approach of choosing said N, M, S, and k so that $N/(M-S)$ and k may become the relation of relatively prime, and conveying at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D $N/(M-S)$ twice the feed per revolution of said.

[Claim 26] The printing approach of being the printing approach according to claim 25, and driving at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 1st scanning direction with the 1st [according to said count M-S of a scan] scanning direction rate.

[Claim 27] It is the printing approach according to claim 19. The dot formative element of said N individual While being classified into the block of BN individual (integer with BN equal to N/M) which contains M dot formative elements, respectively and being mutually separated only from interblock distance pb-D (pb is the positive integer of k and an inequality) of the adjoining block Said M dot formative element groups are formed of the corresponding dot formative element in each block. Said M dot formative elements in said each block. It is possible to form the M same dots located in a line with about 1 train along said 2nd scanning direction by said minimum element pitch k-D in each scan along said 1st scanning direction. When carrying out the scan of said 1st scanning direction M,S times (S is a positive integer) and forming the dot line of said 1st scanning direction. The printing approach of choosing said N, M, S, k, and pb so that $N/(M-S)$ and $(k \text{ and } (M-1) \div \text{tpb})$ may become the relation of relatively prime, and conveying at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D $N/(M-S)$ twice the feed per revolution of said.

[Claim 28] The printing approach of being the printing approach according to claim 27, and driving at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 1st scanning direction with the 1st [according to said count M-S of a scan] scanning direction rate.

[Claim 29] While forming a dot in the printing field on said printing record medium, moving at least one side of the print head and a printing record medium to the 1st scanning direction. It is the record medium which recorded the computer program for the computer which controls the airline printer made to move at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to the 2nd scanning direction where said 1st scanning direction intersects perpendicularly and in which computer reading is possible. Said print head is equipped with the dot formative element of N individual (N is four or more integers), the minimum element pitch along said 2nd scanning direction between two adjoining dot formative elements in said print head — k-D (k — an integer —) D is a dot pitch equivalent to print resolution, and the dot formative element of said N individual is classified into M dot formative element groups (M and N/M are two or more integers, respectively) containing the dot formative element of a N/M individual, respectively. As for the dot formative element group of the i-th in said M dot formative element groups (i is 1 —

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(M-1) an integer, and eye watch (i+1), only between-groups pitch pgi and D (integer for which pgi differs from said k) have shifted to said 2nd scanning direction. The 1st program which operates said computer so that said computer program may convey at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D twice [more than] the fixed feed per revolution of said. So that said M dot formative element groups may have the same location pattern which can be dot formed And so that formation of a dot may be attained in all the dot locations in said printing field by shifting mutually said each location pattern of said M dot formative element groups which can be dot formed The record medium equipped with the 2nd program which operates said computer in which computer reading is possible.

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DETAILED DESCRIPTION

[Detailed Description of the Invention]

[0001]

[of the Invention] This invention relates to the record medium which recorded the program performing the processing in the airline printer equipped with the print head which has two or more dot formative element groups arranged in a distance between groups which uses for example, an ink jet type serial printer, a line printer, etc., and is different from especially a dot formative element pitch about a suitable printing technique and the printing approach, and a list [0002]

[Description of the Prior Art] Although the serial printer which prints one character at a time, the line printer which prints one line at a time are known as an airline printer by the conventional technique, for example. For example, a serial non impact ink jet printer. The printing result according to print data is obtained by making an ink droplet breathe out from each nozzle, making a main scanning direction drive the print head in which two or more nozzles were formed, and conveying printing record media, such as a form, in the direction of vertical scanning which intersects perpendicularly with a main scanning direction. However, in this conventional ink jet printer, since the dot line where it adjoins on a printing record medium is formed of the ink droplet breathed out from the same nozzle, the variation in a nozzle property etc. tends to be conspicuous, and there is a problem that printing quality is low.

[0003] It sets up so that drive nozzle several n and the nozzle pitch k may stand on the relation of relatively prime, and the so-called interface printing of constant pitch vertical scanning of performing paper feed in the fixed amount of vertical scanning of n dot pitch is proposed there as indicated by U.S. Pat. No. 4198642 etc.

[0004] Drawing 1 is the explanatory view showing the conventional interface printing. The nozzle (#1-#9) of N individual (the example of illustration $N=9$) is arranged in the direction of vertical scanning by the print head 100 by predetermined nozzle pitch k -D (the example of illustration $k=D$). Moreover, vertical-scanning delivery is performed by fixed feed-per-revolution L-D. In order all nozzles as a drive nozzle in the example shown in drawing 1, drive nozzle several l (the number N and l is equal. Here, D is print resolution and is also called the "dot pitch." In addition, below, only the integral part may be used as various kinds of parameters (k -D, L, D grades) defined by the integral multiple of a dot pitch D . For example, a "nozzle pitch", a call, and L are called a "feed per revolution" for k . When performing interface printing, the nozzle pitch k and vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L (=n) have the relation of relatively prime. For example, if print resolution of the direction of vertical scanning is set to 360dpi in the case of $k=D$, the nozzle pitch k will become 4 dots (4/360 inch). Similarly, amount of paper feeds, i.e.,

4, the nozzle scanning feed per revolution, L (=n) becomes 9 dots (9/360 inch). [0005] An adjoining dot line is formed of a mutually different nozzle by performing vertical scanning of L dot pitch, whenever it performs horizontal scanning of the print head 100 once, as shown in drawing 1. For example, the next dot line of the dot line which #7 nozzle forms with the 1st horizontal-scanning pass is formed of #5 nozzle, the next dot line is further formed of #3 nozzle, and the next dot line is further formed of #1 nozzle. Therefore, since the variation in a nozzle property etc. is distributed by using interface printing, a high-definition printing image can

be obtained.

[0006]

[Problem(s) to be Solved by the Invention] In the ink jet printer of the interface printing method by the conventional technique, after being premised on the fixed nozzle pitch k being obtained, it sets up so that the nozzle pitch k and drive nozzle several n may stand on the relation of relatively prime, and fixed paper feed of n dot pitch is performed.

[0007] By the way, the need for "formation of many nozzles" of forming many nozzles in the print head conventionally is increasing by the request of the improvement in a print speed etc. in recent years. However, it is difficult to form many nozzles stably in a fixed nozzle pitch, and a nozzle pitch may be changed on the way, or may produce a defect for some nozzles. Since a raster laps or the raster of printing impossible is produced even if it performs interface printing by the conventional technique when a predetermined nozzle pitch cannot be obtained, printing quality deteriorates sharply. Therefore, when forming many nozzles in the print head, a predetermined nozzle pitch must be secured, but since the yield falls, a manufacturing cost also rises. If it puts in another way, since it is premised on a fixed nozzle pitch being obtained regardless of the request of the formation of many nozzles in recent years, with the conventional technique, obtaining a fixed nozzle pitch cannot apply to the airline printer of difficult many nozzles as it is at all.

[0008] The purpose of this invention is to acquire high-definition printing image quality using the print head equipped with many dot formative elements. Other purposes of this invention are to enable interface printing, even when the pitches of a dot formative element differ on the way.

[0009]

[The means for solving a technical problem, and its operation and effectiveness] In order to attain a part of *** or other purposes [at least], this invention offers the airline printer which prints by forming a dot in the printing field on a printing record medium. The 1st scan mechanical component which this airline printer makes move at least one side of the print head, said print head, and said printing record medium to the 1st scanning direction. The 2nd scan mechanical component which moves at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to the 2nd scanning direction where said 1st scanning direction intersects perpendicularly. It has the print head mechanical component which forms a dot on said printing record medium by driving said print head based on a printing image data. The minimum element pitch which said print head was equipped with the dot formative element of N individual (N is four or more integers), and met said 2nd scanning direction between two adjoining dot formative elements in said print head is k -D (dot pitch by which k is equivalent to an integer and D is equivalent to print resolution). Moreover, the dot formative element of said N individual is classified into M dot formative element groups (M and N/M are two or more integers, respectively) containing the dot formative element of a N/M individual, respectively. As for the dot formative element group of the i -th in said M dot formative element groups (i is $1 \sim (M-1)$ an integer), and eye watch ($i+1$), only between-groups pitch pg_i and D (integer for which pg_i differs from said k) have shifted to said 2nd scanning direction. Said 2nd scan mechanical component conveys at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D twice [more than] the fixed feed per revolution of said. Said print head and said printing record medium are driven by shifting mutually said each location pattern of said M dot formative element groups which can be dot formed so that formation of a dot may be attained in all the dot locations in said printing field, so that it may have the location pattern [said the 1st and 2nd scan mechanical components and said print head mechanical components] with said M same dot formative element groups which can be dot formed. [0010] Here, the ink jet type actuator which a "dot formative element" means [actuator] the device or means for forming a dot in a printing record medium, for example, makes an ink droplet breathe out from a nozzle hole at a piezoelectric transducer, a heater, etc. corresponds. [0011] In the above-mentioned airline printer, since the so-called interface printing can be performed with the feed per revolution 2 and more than D using M dot formative element groups, high-definition printing image quality can be acquired using the print head equipped with many dot formative elements.

[0012] According to one mode of this invention, along said 2nd scanning direction, an adjoining dot formative element group vacates a gap, and is separated, and the dot formative element of said N/M individual of each dot formative element group can form the dot of the same N/M individual located in a line with about 1 train along said 2nd scanning direction by said minimum element pitch k-D in each scan along said 1st scanning direction.

[0013] an operative condition — setting like, said each same pattern of said M dot formative element groups consists of two or more dot lines of said 1st scanning direction periodically arranged in the pitch of M dot.

[0014] Only between-groups distance pni and D (pni is an integer) are separated between said i-th dot formative element groups of eye watch (i+1). Said pni Value pni -pni(s) from the 1st to the i-th It is set up so that the value from which the value of too much (M-1) individual which ** (ed) the accumulation value (sigman) with the number M of dot formative element groups differs mutually $[1 - (M-1)]$ may be taken. Moreover, when carrying out the scan of said 1st scanning direction S times (S is a positive integer and M-S is the factor of N) and forming the

line of said 1st scanning direction. Choosing said N, M, S, and k, so that $N/(M-S)$ and k/M become the relation of relatively prime, said 2nd scan mechanical component conveys at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D N/S twice the feed per revolution of said. Here, "a distance between groups" means the clearance of adjoining dot formative element groups, and means the pitch between the dot formative elements which more specifically approach most among each dot formative element of an adjoining dot formative element group.

[0015] Thus, what is necessary is just to have realized minimum element pitch k-D predetermined within each dot formative element group, when grouping of the dot formative element of N individual is carried out to M dot formative element groups and between-groups distance pni and D of each dot formative element group are set up as mentioned above. If it puts in another way, the print head which has many dot formative elements can be easily obtained by integrating the dot formative element group in which the dot formative element was arranged by predetermined minimum element pitch k-D.

[0016] And an adjoining dot line can be formed by mutually different dot formative element by choosing said N, M, S, and k so that $N/(M-S)$ and k/M may become the relation of relatively prime, and making the 2nd scanning direction convey at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium by the dot pitch N/S twice the feed per revolution of D by the 2nd scan mechanical component.

[0017] Said print head is formed by only said between-groups distance pni's and D's making said 2nd scanning direction estrange M dot formative element units which have the dot formative element of a N/M individual, respectively, and arranging them in it, and you may make it said N/M dot formative element of each dot formative element unit have the pitch equal to said minimum element pitch k-D to said 2nd scanning direction.

[0018] By using two or more dot formative element units in which it comes to arrange a dot formative element by minimum element pitch k-D, the print head which has many dot formative elements conventionally can be obtained easily. That is, arrange two or more dot formative element units of each, and the print head is formed, the yield is [direction] high and a manufacturing cost decreases rather than it makes many dot formative elements at once to the print head.

[0019] Said each dot formative element unit may be made to be formed, when two or more dot formative elements make said 1st scanning direction estrange the even-dot formative element train and odd-dot formative element train which were formed in said 2nd scanning direction by twice as many element pitch 2 k-D as said minimum element pitch k-D and arrange them, respectively.

[0020] By arranging two dot formative element trains side by side to the 1st scanning direction, the minimum element pitch in each dot formative element train can be doubled in the case of forming by the single tier (= 2 k-D). Therefore, many dot formative elements can be easily formed in one dot formative element unit.

[0021] You may make it said 1st scan mechanical component drive at least one side of said print

head and said printing record medium to said 1st scanning direction with the 1st [according to said count S of a scan] scanning direction rate.

[0022] For example, when the count S of a scan is set as 2 (S=2), the dot line where the 1st scanning direction continued will be formed with two scans. Therefore, if the same as that of the case where the feed rate (1st scanning direction rate) of the print head or a printing record medium is $S = 1$, a print speed will fall to one half. Then, high-definition printing image quality can be acquired by changing dynamically the feed rate of the print head or a printing record medium according to the count S of a scan, without reducing a printing throughput. Here, "the 1st [according to the count S of a scan] scanning direction rate" means the 1st scanning direction rate proportional to the count S of a scan in more detail. Although it is desirable to make it be proportional to the count S of a scan as for the 1st scanning direction rate, this invention is not limited to this.

[0023] other voice of this invention — setting like, said each same pattern of said M dot formative element groups consists of two or more dots periodically arranged in the pitch of M dot on each dot line of said 1st scanning direction.

[0024] In the embodiment, only between-groups distance pni and D (pni is an integer) are separated between said i-th dot formative element groups of eye watch (i+1), and it is said pni. It is set as a different integral value from k. Moreover, when carrying out the scan of said 1st scanning direction M/S times (S is a positive integer and M-S is the factor of N) and forming the dot line of said 1st scanning direction. Choosing said N, M, S, and k so that $N/(M-S)$ and k may become the relation of relatively prime, said 2nd scan mechanical component conveys at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D N/(M-S) twice the feed per revolution of said.

[0025] What is necessary is just to have realized minimum element pitch k-D predetermined within each dot formative element group, when grouping of the dot formative element of N individual is carried out to M dot formative element groups and between-groups distance pni and D of each dot formative element group are set up as mentioned above. If it puts in another way, the print head which has many dot formative elements can be easily obtained by integrating the dot formative element group in which the dot formative element was arranged by predetermined minimum element pitch k-D.

[0026] And an adjoining dot line can be formed by mutually different dot formative element by choosing said N, M, S, and k so that $N/(M-S)$ and k may become the relation of relatively prime, and making the 2nd scanning direction convey at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium by the 2nd scan mechanical component by the dot pitch N/(M-S) twice the feed per revolution of D. Moreover, since each raster in a printing field is scanned by each dot formative element group, respectively, it can perform the so-called overlap printing.

[0027] Said M dot formative element groups may be made to be formed by stopping some dot formative elements among two or more dot formative elements arranged in said 2nd scanning direction by said minimum element pitch k-D in said print head.

[0028] That is, two or more dot formative element groups can be obtained by forming two or more dot formative elements by predetermined minimum element pitch k-D, and not using some dot formative elements. In this case, between-groups distance pni and D serve as a multiple of minimum element pitch k-D. Thereby, when defects, such as property degradation and an omission, arise for example, in a part of dot formative element, interface printing by this invention can also be performed by stopping the dot formative element concerned.

[0029] In other modes of an airline printer, the dot formative element of said N individual While being classified into the block of BN individual (integer with BN equal to N/M) which contains M dot formative elements, respectively and being mutually separated only from interblock distance pb-D (pb is the positive integer of k and an inequality) of the adjoining block Said M dot

formative element groups are formed of the corresponding dot formative element in each block. Said M dot formative elements in said each block It is possible to form the M same dots located in a line with about 1 train along said 2nd scanning direction by said minimum element pitch k-D in each scan along said 1st scanning direction. When carrying out the scan of said 1st scanning direction M/S times (S is a positive integer) and forming the dot line of said 1st scanning

direction. Said N, M, S, k, and pb are chosen so that $N/(M-S)$ and $(k-1) \cdot pb$ may become the relation of relatively prime. Said 2nd scan mechanical component At least one side of said print head and said printing record medium is conveyed to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch $D \cdot N/(M-S)$ twice the feed per revolution of said.

[0030] For example, considering the case ($N=10$, $BN=2$) where ten dot formative elements are divided into two blocks, each block is constituted by every five dot formative elements.

respectively ($N/BN=10/2=5$), therefore — the inside of each block — 1st dot formative element — five dot formative elements to the 5th dot formative element exist, respectively. Then, five dot formative element groups can be constituted by carrying out grouping of the corresponding dot formative element within each block like the 1st dot formative element of each block, the 2nd dot formative element, and the 3rd dot formative element. Thus, also when a dot formative element group is constituted, overlap printing by interface can be performed.

[0031] The block of said BN individual may be made to be formed by stopping some dot

formation by said minimum element pitch $k \cdot D$ in said print head.

[0032] Moreover, you may make it said 1st scan mechanical component drive at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 1st scanning direction with the 1st [according to said count $M-S$ of a scan] scanning direction rate.

[0033] Here, M dot formative element groups will scan the same dot line by a unit of S times, respectively. For example, when two dot formative element groups M1 and M2 are formed, each dot line in a printing field is scanned by the 2nd dot formative element group M2 while it is scanned by the 1st dot formative element group M1. And the dot line which followed the 1st scanning direction is formed of each scan of each dot formative element groups M1 and M2.

Therefore, since each dot formative element group is what shows the count scanned, respectively, said S can also be expressed as "a count S of a group scan."

[0034] Now, for example, when S is set as 2 ($S=2$), the dot line where the 1st scanning direction continued will be formed with the scan of 2M time. Therefore, if the same as that of the case where the feed rate (1st scanning direction rate) of the print head or a printing record medium is $S=1$, a print speed will fall to one half. Then, high-definition printing image quality can be acquired by changing the feed rate of the print head accommodative according to count $M-S$ of a scan, without reducing a printing throughput.

[0035] Here, "the 1st [according to count $M-S$ of a scan] scanning direction rate" means in more detail the 1st scanning direction rate which increases according to count $M-S$ of a scan. Although it is desirable to make it be proportional to count $M-S$ of a scan as for the 1st scanning direction rate, this invention is not limited to this.

[0036] This invention is turned also to the printing approach which prints using the airline printer made to move at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to the 2nd scanning direction where said 1st scanning direction intersects perpendicularly while it forms a the printing field on said printing record medium again, moving at least one side of the head and a printing record medium to the 1st scanning direction. By this printing approach, at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium is conveyed to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D twice [more than] the fixed feed per revolution of said. Moreover, by shifting mutually said each location pattern of said M dot formative element groups which can be dot formed, said print head and said printing record medium are driven so that formation of a dot may be attained in all the dot locations in said printing field, so that said M dot formative element groups may have the same location pattern which can be dot formed.

[0037] This invention is turned also to the record medium which recorded the computer program for the computer which controls the airline printer made to move at least one side of said print head and said printing record medium to the 2nd scanning direction where said 1st scanning direction intersects perpendicularly while it forms a dot in the printing field on said printing record medium further, moving at least one side of the print head and a printing record medium to the 1st scanning direction. The 1st program which operates said computer so that this computer program may convey one side of said print head and said printing record medium to said 2nd scanning direction by the dot pitch D twice [more than] the fixed feed per revolution

of said. So that said M dot formative element groups may have the same location pattern which can be dot formed And by shifting mutually said each location pattern of said M dot formative element groups which can be dot formed, it has the 2nd program which operates said computer so that formation of a dot may be attained in all the dot locations in said printing field.

[0038]

[Other modes of invention] This invention contains other following modes. The 1st mode is a mode as a program feeder which supplies to a computer the computer program which realizes each process of the above-mentioned invention, or the function of each part through a communication path. In such a mode, a program can be put on the server on a network, etc., a required program can be downloaded to a computer through a communication path, and above approach and equipment can be realized by performing this.

[0039]

[Embodiment of the invention]

A. Fundamental condition drawing 2 of a printing method using the nozzle group of A-1, 1 fundamental conditions of a general printing method is an explanatory view to show the fundamental conditions of a printing method of having used one nozzle group. In drawing 2 (A), the round head of a continuous line including a figure shows the location of the direction of vertical scanning of four nozzles after each vertical-scanning delivery. The figures 1-4 in a round head mean the nozzle number.

[0040] The various parameters about this printing method are shown in drawing 2 (B). Nozzle pitch k [a dot], and the use nozzle number N1 [an individual], the count S of a scan, vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L [a dot] and * are contained in the parameter of a printing method. Count of scan S [a time] is a count which shows with how many times horizontal scanning each raster is filled by the dot. In the example of drawing 2, since each raster is filled with one horizontal scanning, it is $S=1$.

[0041] In the example of drawing 2, the nozzle pitch k is 3 dots and the use nozzle number N1 is four pieces. In addition, the use nozzle number N1 is the number of the nozzle actually used in two or more nozzles mounted. It means that the count S of a scan forms a dot intermittently every dot ($S=1$) in one horizontal scanning. Therefore, the count S of a scan is equal also to the number of the nozzles used in order to record all the dots on each raster.

[0042] The offset F of the nozzle after each vertical-scanning delivery is indicated to be vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L and its cumulative value signal L for every vertical-scanning delivery to the table of drawing 2 (B). Here, Offset F is a value which shows how many dots the location of the nozzle after vertical-scanning delivery has separated from the criteria location in the direction of vertical scanning, when the periodic location (drawing 2 location in every 4 dots) of the first nozzle where vertical-scanning delivery is not performed is assumed to be the criteria location of offset 0. For example, as shown in drawing 2 (A), only vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L (4 dots) moves the location of a nozzle in the direction of vertical scanning by the 1st vertical-scanning delivery. On the other hand, the nozzle pitch k is 3 dots. Therefore, the offset F of the nozzle after the 1st vertical-scanning delivery is 1 (refer to drawing 2 (A)). Similarly, sigma $L=8$ dots of locations of the nozzle after the 2nd vertical-scanning delivery are moved from the initial valve position, and the offset F is 2, sigma $L=12$ dots of locations of the nozzle after the 3rd vertical-scanning delivery are moved from the initial valve position, and the offset F is 0. Since the offset F of a nozzle returns to 0 by 3 times of vertical-scanning delivery, all the dots on the raster in a printing field are recordable by repeating this cycle by making three vertical scanning into 1 cycle.

[0043] Offset F is zero, when the location of a nozzle is located in the location which separated only the integral multiple of the nozzle pitch k from the initial valve position so that the above-mentioned example may also show. Moreover, Offset F is given by $\%k$ just because it broke cumulative value signal of vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L [] L by the nozzle pitch k (signal). It is the operator which shows that remainder of a division is taken $\%$ here. In addition, if the initial valve position of a nozzle is considered to be a periodic location, Offset F can also be considered that the amount of phase shifts from the initial valve position of a nozzle is shown.

[0044] In order to make it there be neither an omission nor duplication in the raster by which vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L is recorded for the count S of a scan by 1 in a fixed case, it is necessary to satisfy the following conditions C1.

[0045] [Condition C1]: Vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L is equal to N1 use nozzle, and as for vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L (= N1) and the nozzle pitch k, has the relation of relatively prime.

[0046] He can understand this condition C1 by thinking as follows. That is, if it records that there is no omission of a raster, the raster of $1/k \times N$ will be recorded among k scans. At this time, the location of the nozzle after k times of vertical-scanning delivery should come to the location distant from the early nozzle location by the N1/k raster. What is necessary is just to carry out a "for it to be to N1 use nozzle about vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L" setup, in order to realize such a nozzle location. Moreover, in order to make it there be neither an omission nor duplication in the raster recorded, it is necessary to take the value from which the value of each offset F in k times of each vertical-scanning delivery differs mutually [0 - (k-1) the range]. It is necessary is just to carry out a "for it to be in the relation of relatively prime about vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L and the nozzle pitch k" setup, in order to realize the value of such offset F. Here, "relation of relatively prime" means that two integers do not have any common divisors other than one. By satisfying the above-mentioned conditions C1, an omission and duplication can be lost to the raster recorded.

[0047] Drawing 3 is an explanatory view to show the fundamental conditions of a printing method in case the count S of a scan is two or more. The printing method shown in drawing 3 changes the count S of a scan, and vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L in the parameter of the printing method shown in drawing 2 (B). As drawing 3 (A) also shows, vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L in the printing method of drawing 3 is the constant value of 2 dots. In drawing 3 (A), the rhombus shows the location of the nozzle after the oddth vertical-scanning delivery. As shown in the right end of drawing 3 (A), the dot location recorded after the oddth vertical-scanning delivery has shifted from the dot location recorded after the eventh vertical-scanning delivery to the main scanning direction by 1 dot. Therefore, two or more dots on the same raster will be intermittently recorded by two different nozzles, respectively. For example, after the raster of the maximum upper limit in a printing field is intermittently recorded every other dot with the nozzle of No. 3 after the 1st vertical-scanning delivery, it is intermittently recorded every other dot with the nozzle of No. 1 after the 4th vertical-scanning delivery. Thus, when the count S of a scan is two or more, the same raster is recorded with S different nozzles.

[0048] The value of the offset F after vertical-scanning of multiple times is shown in the bottom of the table of drawing 3 (B). The offset F after vertical-scanning delivery of each time from the 1st time to the 6th time includes the value of the range of 0-2 by a unit of 2 times.

[0049] Since one raster is generally recorded by S scans when the count S of a scan is two or more, it is possible that the effective number of nozzles is N1/S. Therefore, what is necessary is to set up vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L equally to this effective nozzle several times. That is, when the counts S of a scan are two or more integers, the conditions C1 mentioned above are rewritten like the following condition C1'.

[0050] [Condition C1']: Vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L is equal to effective nozzle several N1/S, and as for vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L (= N1/S) and the nozzle pitch k, has the relation of relatively prime.

[0051] Since vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L and the nozzle pitch k have the relation of relatively prime also in this condition C1', as the offset F after k times of vertical-scanning delivery is shown in drawing 3 (B), the value from which 0 - (k-1) the range differ is taken. Moreover, the offset F after vertical-scanning delivery of a kxS time takes the value from which 0 - (k-1) the range differ by a unit of S times, respectively. In addition, the count S of a scan is chosen so that N1/S may become one or more integers.

[0052] Above-mentioned condition C1' is materialized also when the count S of a scan is 1. Therefore, condition C1' is conditions generally satisfied about the printing method which performs vertical-scanning delivery by fixed feed-per-revolution L using 1 set of nozzle groups irrespective of the value of the count S of a scan. However, when the count S of a scan is two

or more, the conditions of shifting mutually the record location of the nozzle which records the same raster to a main scanning direction are also required.

[0053] A-2. Fundamental condition drawing 4 of a printing method using two or more nozzle groups is an explanatory view to show the fundamental conditions of the 1st printing method of having used two or more nozzle groups. M nozzle group NG1 - NGM(s) (drawing 4 M=3) have the same nozzle configuration, and have the nozzle of one N arranged in the fixed nozzle pitch k, respectively, therefore, nozzle group NG1 - NGM of M individual several total nozzles - N is equal to N1 and M. In addition, i-th nozzle group NGi Nozzle group NGi+1 of eye watch (i+1) The distance (it is called "a distance between groups") of a between is pni. It is a dot. Moreover, i-th nozzle group NGi Nozzle group NGi+1 of eye watch (i+1) The distance between corresponding nozzles (it is called "a pitch between groups") is pgi. It is a dot.

[0054] The raster recorded by each nozzle group is distinguished and shown in the right-hand side of drawing 4. By the 1st printing method, the raster on which each nozzle group is recording a mutually different raster, and is recorded by each nozzle group is periodically arranged in the pitch of M dots so that it may understand from now on (in recording such a raster how by the 1st printing method, it explains in full detail later). That is, arrangement of the raster to which each nozzle group performs record shows the same pattern arranged periodically in the pitch of M dots, and enables it to record all the dots in a printing field in the 1st printing method by shifting this same pattern little by little for every nozzle group.

[0055] In the printing method of drawing 4, since each nozzle group is recording the raster arranged in the pitch of M dots using two or more nozzles arranged in the nozzle pitch k, vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L is increased M times of the feeds per revolution N1/S in the case of using one nozzle group. Moreover, with the printing method on which each nozzle group records the raster of one dot pitch using the nozzle of a nozzle pitch (k/M), since this printing method is equivalence mostly, it sets effective nozzle several N1/S and k/M as the relation of relatively prime. At this time, above-mentioned condition C1' can be rewritten as follows.

[0056] [Condition C2a]: Vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L is equal M times (=N/S) of effective nozzle several N1/S, and, as for effective nozzle several N1/S (=N/(M-S)) and (k/M), has the relation of relatively prime.

[0057] If this condition C2a is satisfied, each nozzle group can record the raster arranged in the pitch of M dots, respectively. In addition, the nozzle pitch k and the number M of nozzle groups are chosen so that (k/M) may become one or more integers. What is necessary is on the other hand, just to satisfy condition C2b shown below, in order to make it the raster group recorded by each nozzle group shift little by little mutually as shown in the right-hand side of drawing 4.

[0058] The value from which the value of the individual (M-1) of [condition C2b] (sigmapn) %M differs mutually [1 - (M-1)] is taken.

[0059] Here, (sigmapn) is between-groups distance pni - pni(s) from the 1st to the i-th (i is 1 - (M-1) an integer). A accumulation value is shown and an operator "%" shows the operation which takes remainder of a division. Distance pni between groups As long as it fills the above-mentioned condition C2b, an equal value is mutually sufficient as between-groups distance pni - pniM-1 of an individual (M-1).

[0060] In addition, it sets to condition C2b and is the distance pni between groups. It is the pitch pgi between groups to instead of. The used following condition C2c is also materialized.

[0061] The value from which the value of the individual (M-1) of [condition C2c] (sigmagp) %M differs mutually [1 - (M-1)] is taken.

[0062] Pitch pgi between groups Since it can also take smaller than distance k - between the nozzles of the both ends of one nozzle group (N1-1) they are conditions with the more common condition C2c than condition C2b. That is, condition C2bs are conditions which are satisfied in the specification which satisfies more general condition C2c.

[0063] Drawing 5 is an explanatory view to show the fundamental conditions of the 2nd printing method of having used two or more nozzle groups. In this printing method, each nozzle group records on all rasters, and each nozzle group takes charge of record of 1/M of all the dots of one raster, if it puts in another way, the dot recorded by one nozzle group is arranged in the

pitch of M dot on each raster (such a dot is recorded how, or it attaches [it is alike,] and explains in full detail later). Since, as for such a printing method, each nozzle group performs record on all rasters, about vertical-scanning delivery, the same following conditions as the printing method only using one nozzle group shown in drawing 3 are satisfied.

[0064] [Condition C3a]: Vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution L is equal to effective nozzle several $N1/S (=N/(M-S))$, and, as for vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution $L (=N/(M-S))$ and the nozzle pitch k, has the relation of relatively prime.

[0065] Moreover, distance pri between groups What is necessary is to be related and just to fill the following condition C3b looser than the above-mentioned condition C2b.

[0066] [Condition C3b]: Distance pri between groups A different value from the nozzle pitch k is taken.

[0067] Similarly, it is the pitch pgi between groups. What is necessary is to be related and just to fill the following condition C3c looser than the above-mentioned condition C2c.

[0068] [Condition C3c]: Pitch pgi between groups A different value from the nozzle pitch k is

[0069] In addition, in the 2nd printing method shown in drawing 5, each raster is recorded by M nozzle groups, and each nozzle group records by S scans on one raster. Since each raster is recorded by M/S scans, it calls (M-S) "the count of a raster scan." Moreover, "the count of a group scan" calls the count S of a scan of one nozzle group.

[0070] In addition, although the dot line of the direction of a train (perpendicular direction) is recorded by one nozzle group in the example of drawing 5, it is also possible to record the dot line of the direction of a train by different nozzle group like the example of drawing 17 mentioned later and drawing 18. Also in this case, the dot recorded by each nozzle group takes the arrangement from which the location of the dot which is arranged in the pitch of M dots and recorded by that nozzle group on each raster shifts to a line writing direction for every raster. That is, arrangement of the dot to which each nozzle group performs record shows the same pattern of being periodically arranged in the pitch of M dot on each raster, and enables it to record all the dots in a printing field in the 2nd printing method by shifting this same pattern little by little for every nozzle group.

[0071] In addition, in this specification, the vocabulary a "dot line" is used also as a generic name of Rhine (namely, raster) formed by the dot on a par with a line writing direction (horizontal), and Rhine formed by the dot located in a line in the direction of a train (perpendicular direction).

[0072] By the 1st printing method mentioned above, each nozzle group performs record of all the dots on the raster arranged in the pitch of M dots, and on the other hand, by the 2nd printing method, although each nozzle group performs record on [all] a raster, it performs record of the dot arranged in the pitch of M dots on each raster. However, the 1st and the 2nd printing method are common in "All the dot locations in a printing field can be recorded now by the location of two or more nozzle groups forming the same record location pattern, and

[0073] mutually each record location pattern of two or more nozzle groups." Here, in the 1st printing method, "the same record location pattern" is a pattern which consists of "rasters arranged in the pitch of M dots", and is a pattern which consists of "rasters arranged in the pitch of M dots on each raster."

[0073] B. The 1st operation gestalt drawing 6 of the operation gestalt B-1, 1st printing method of the 1st printing method - drawing 8 show the ink jet printer 1 as an airline printer concerning the gestalt of operation of the 1st of the 1st printing method of this invention. Drawing 6 is the explanatory view showing this whole ink jet printer 1 configuration, and the ink jet printer 1 is equipped with the print head 2, the horizontal-scanning mechanical component 3, the vertical-scanning mechanical component 4, the mechanical-component control section 5, the data storage section 6, the print head mechanical component 7, and the horizontal-scanning rate managed table 8 so that it may mention later, respectively. In addition, with the gestalt of this operation, a main scanning direction (longitudinal direction in drawing 6) and the "2nd scanning direction" are expressed for "the 1st scanning direction" as the direction of vertical scanning (the vertical direction in drawing 6), respectively.

[0074] In the print head 2, 1st nozzle group 2a as a "dot formative element group" and 2nd nozzle group 2b estrange only predetermined between-groups distance pn-D, and are arranged in the direction of vertical scanning. This between-groups distance pn-D means the distance which corresponds by pn time the dot pitch D in print resolution. Like [in the case of drawing 6], when the number M of nozzle groups is 2, as a distance pn between groups, the natural number (namely, odd number) which is not a multiple of 2 is chosen.

[0075] It consists of actuator units 10 as a "dot formative element unit", respectively, and each nozzle group 2a and 2b are equipped with the nozzle as a "dot formative element" of one N (the example of illustration N=5), respectively as each nozzle group 2a and 2b are shown in drawing 7. If it puts in another way, grouping of the nozzle of N individual ($N=N1+N2=10$) is carried out to nozzle group 2a and 2b of two pieces. Here, the numbers N of nozzles are four or more integers.

[0076] And within each nozzle group 2a and 2b, each nozzle has nozzle pitch k-D as a "minimum element pitch", and is arranged in the direction of vertical scanning. Nozzle pitch k-D is a distance which corresponds by k times the dot pitch D here, and k is the multiple of the number M of nozzle groups.

[0077] The horizontal-scanning mechanical component 3 as "1st scan mechanical component" drives the print head 2 to a main scanning direction (longitudinal direction in drawing 6) to the printing record medium SP which consists of a print sheet of the shape for example, of a sheet etc. Moreover, the vertical-scanning mechanical component 4 as "2nd scan mechanical component" is driven so that the printing record medium SP may be conveyed in the direction of vertical scanning (the vertical direction in drawing 6) which intersects perpendicularly to a main scanning direction.

[0078] The mechanical-component control section 5 moves the print head 2 to a main scanning direction by controlling the amount of drives, drive timing, etc. by the horizontal-scanning mechanical component, moreover, by making into a dot pitch (N-D/S) N/S twice the value of D the amount of conveyances of the printing record medium SP boiled and twisted to the vertical-scanning mechanical component 4, the mechanical-component control section 5 realizes a constant pitch medium conveyance mode of operation, and controls it to form a dot by the so-called interface printing method.

[0079] Here, in order to make an adjoining dot line form by different nozzle, said parameters N, M, S, and k need to fulfill the conditions "N/(M-S) and k/M are relatively prime." Product M-S of the number M of nozzle groups and the count S of a group scan is the factor of the number N of nozzles, and since the nozzle pitch k is the multiple of the number M of nozzle groups, both N/(M-S) and k/M are integers. In the example shown in drawing 6, if it is the count S=1 of a scan, since it will be set to $N/(M-S)=10/(2-1)=5$ and will be set to $k/M=4/2=2$, $N/(M-S)$ and k/M have the relation of relatively prime. In addition, each of these parameters have satisfied condition C2a mentioned above, C2b, and C2c.

[0080] The data storage section 6 consists of memory which stores a printing image data, and the data block field which is not illustrated is formed in memory. And by energizing to the print head 2 based on the printing image data stored in the data storage section 6, the print head mechanical component 7 makes the printing record medium SP breathe out ink, and, thereby, obtains the printing result based on print data from the predetermined nozzle of 1st nozzle group 2a and 2nd nozzle group 2b.

[0081] The horizontal-scanning rate managed table 8 is for controlling dynamically the horizontal-scanning rate VS as "1st scanning direction rate" according to the count S of a scan of a main scanning direction. That is, it matches with each print mode from which the count S of a scan differs, and the horizontal-scanning rate VS which is the passing speed of the print head 2 is memorized by the horizontal-scanning rate managed table 8. Here, if the horizontal-scanning rate VS 1 of the case of the count S=1 of a scan, i.e., when the dot line of a main scanning direction is formed by one scan, is made into a criteria rate, it is set up so that the horizontal-scanning rate VS may increase according to the scale factor of the count S of a scan. Namely, the horizontal-scanning rate VS 2 at the time of S=2 is set up the twice of the criteria rate VS 1, and the horizontal-scanning rate VS 3 at the time of S=3 is set up by 3 times the criteria

rate VS 1. However, as for this invention, a setup etc. may increase not only this but the horizontal-scanning rate VS 2 at the time of $S = 2.15$ times of the criteria rate VS 1.

[0082] Next, a concrete example of the print head 2 is explained based on drawing 7 and drawing 8. Drawing 7 is the top view of the print head 2. The print head 2 consists of actuator units [two or more (drawing 7 two pieces)] 10, and has estranged only between-groups distance pnd between each actuator unit 10. Two or more nozzle actuators are formed in each actuator unit 10.

[0083] Drawing 8 is the sectional view of each nozzle actuator. The ink room 12, the ink feed hopper 13, and the pressure room 14 are formed in the passage formation plate 11. The ink in an external ink tank (not shown) is supplied in the pressure room 14 through the ink feed hopper 13 from the ink room 12. The diaphragm 15 is formed in the tooth-back side of the passage formation plate 11, and the island section 16 is formed in the diaphragm 15. The piezoelectric transducer 17 is formed in it, as an end side contacts this island section 16. For example, if it charges, it will contract, and this piezoelectric transducer 17 is formed so that it may elongate, if charges.

[] And two or more nozzle holes 21 which corresponded to each nozzle actuator, respectively are formed in the nozzle plate 20. Every actuator unit 10, each nozzle hole 21 has the nozzle pitch kD, and is formed. As shown also in drawing 7, the print head 2 is formed by forming this nozzle plate 20 on the actuator unit 10. In addition, it can also constitute so that an ink droplet may be made to breathe out with the air bubbles generated with heating of this heater for example, not only using this but using a micro heater etc.

[0085] Since each nozzle actuator is the complicated structure equipped with the ink passage and the piezoelectric transducer 17 of pressure room 14 grade, it is difficult for making many nozzle actuators stably to the single actuator unit 10. However, since the print head 2 is constituted from a gestalt of this operation by arranging two or more actuator units 10, the print head 2 equipped with many nozzle actuators can be obtained easily.

[0086] Next, an operation of the gestalt of this operation is explained based on drawing 9 and drawing 10. With the gestalt of this operation, they are $M = 2$ nozzle groups, $N = 10$ nozzles, the nozzle pitch $k = 4$, between-groups distance $pn = 5$, the count $S = 1$ of a scan, and vertical-scanning feed-per-revolution $L = N$ as mentioned above.

[0087] In each horizontal-scanning pass, each nozzle of each nozzle group 2a and 2b can form a dot by carrying out the regurgitation of the ink droplet, respectively. A dot line cannot be densely formed in the direction of vertical scanning until the relative location of the print head 2 and the printing record medium SP reaches position relation, since constant pitch vertical scanning of N dot pitch is performed for every horizontal scanning. That is, the location of #B3 nozzle in the 3rd horizontal-scanning pass P3 is the starting point of a printing field.

[0088] Drawing 10 is the explanatory view expanding and showing the dot formation situation for 12-dot Rhine from the starting point of a printing field. As shown in drawing 10, since it is the 12-dot Rhine from the starting point of a printing field, each dot line of a main scanning direction is formed of one horizontal scanning. Moreover, each dot line which adjoins in the direction of vertical scanning is formed of a nozzle different, respectively.

[0089] Thus, the following effectiveness is done so with the gestalt of this implementation constituted.

[0090] Since the print head 2 is formed by carrying out grouping of two or more nozzles (nozzle actuator) to two or more nozzle group 2a and 2b, making the 1st estrange only a different distance pnd between groups from the nozzle pitch k, and arranging each nozzle group 2a and 2b in it, the print head 2 equipped with many nozzles can be obtained easily. That is, since it is sufficient if the nozzle pitch k is secured only within each nozzle group 2a and 2b, the yield improves and a manufacturing cost decreases.

[0091] $N/(M-S)$ and k/M become the relation of relatively prime the 2nd — as — several use nozzles — N, the number M of nozzle groups, the count S of a scan, and the nozzle pitch k can be chosen, and the print head 2 from which a nozzle pitch differs partially can realize the so-called interface printing for the configuration which performs N/S twice as many constant pitch vertical scanning as a dot pitch D. Therefore, an adjoining dot line can be formed by mutually

different nozzle, the variation in a nozzle property can be distributed, and high-definition printing can be performed.

[0092] Since the print head 2 is formed by arranging two or more actuator units 10 in which two or more nozzle actuators were installed successively with the nozzle pitch k, the 3rd in the direction of vertical scanning, respectively in the direction of vertical scanning, the print head of many nozzles can be obtained stably. Moreover, the print head 2 of the various numbers of nozzles can be obtained only by modification etc. carrying out the number of the actuator units 10 to be used.

[0093] B-2. Explain the gestalt of operation of the 2nd of the 1st printing method of this invention based on the 1st operation gestalt next drawing 11, and drawing 12 of a printing method. [2nd] In addition, with the gestalt of each following operation, the same sign shall be given to the same component as the gestalt of operation of the 1st of the 1st printing method mentioned above, and the explanation shall be omitted. The description of the gestalt of this operation is in the point of having divided all nozzles into three nozzle groups.

[0094] That is, the print head 31 of the gestalt of this operation consists of the 1st nozzle group 31a in which three nozzles were arranged in the nozzle pitch k, the 2nd nozzle group 31b, and the 3rd nozzle group 31c, respectively. Moreover, 1st nozzle group 31a and 2nd nozzle group 31b have estranged only the 1st between-groups distance pn1 and D, and 2nd nozzle group 31b and 3rd nozzle group 31c have estranged only the 2nd between-groups distance pn2 and D. Each parameter of the gestalt of this operation is $N = 9$ nozzles to be used, $M = 3$ nozzle groups, the count $S = 1$ of a scan, the nozzle pitch $k = 6$, the 1st distance $pn = 8$ between groups, and the 2nd distance $pn = 5$ between groups. Therefore, since it is $N/(M-S) = 9/(3-1) = 3$, $k/M = 6/3 = 2$, these are relatively prime.

[0095] It is possible to determine like the gestalt of this operation, here based on the following formula 1, when the distance pn1 between groups differs by each nozzle between groups, respectively.

[0096] $pn1 = (pn2 + \alpha - M) - (\text{formula 1})$

However, the integer of alpha, i.e., one distance between groups, is the value which added the multiple of M to pn1 and the distance pn2 of another side between groups. In the case of the gestalt of this operation, the 1st distance pn1 between groups is determined as $pn1 = (pn2 + \alpha - M) = (5 + 1 - 3) = 8$. In addition, what is necessary is just to fill above-mentioned condition C2b "for the value from which the value of the individual $(M-1)$ of $\%(\text{sigmapn})$ M differs mutually $1 - (M-1)$ to be taken" generally.

[0097] The location of #B-2 nozzle in the 3rd horizontal-scanning pass P3 serves as the starting point of a printing field, and can form a dot line in the direction of vertical scanning densely from here as shown in drawing 11 in the case of the gestalt of this operation. Drawing 12 is the explanatory view expanding and showing the dot formation situation for 15-dot Rhine from the starting point of a printing field. As shown in drawing 12, the dot line which adjoins in the direction of vertical scanning is formed of a nozzle different, respectively.

[0098] Therefore, the same effectiveness as the gestalt of operation of the 1st of the 1st printing method mentioned above can be acquired also with the gestalt of this implementation constituted in this way.

[0099] B-3. Explain the gestalt of operation of the 3rd of the 1st printing method of this invention based on the 1st gestalt next drawing 13, and drawing 14 of operation of the 3rd of a printing method. The description of the gestalt of this operation is that it forms the dot line of a main scanning direction in a main scanning direction by scanning twice.

[0100] That is, the print head 41 in the gestalt of this operation consists of 1st nozzle group 41a and 2nd nozzle group 41b which were arranged in the direction of vertical scanning through between-groups distance pnd, and each nozzle groups 41a and 41b are formed by arranging six nozzles in the direction of vertical scanning by nozzle pitch k-D, respectively. Each parameter of the gestalt of this operation is $N = 12$ nozzles to be used, $M = 2$ nozzle groups, the count $S = 2$ of a scan, the nozzle pitch $k = 4$, and between-groups distance $pn = 5$, therefore — since it is $N/(M-S) = 12/(2-2) = 3$, $k/M = 4/2 = 2$ — $N/(M-S)$ and k/M — ** — it is relatively prime.

[0101] As shown in drawing 13, with the gestalt of this operation, a printing field begins from the

location of #B5 nozzle in the 5th horizontal-scanning pass P5, and each dot line is formed of two horizontal scanning, respectively. Drawing 14 is the explanatory view expanding and showing the dot formation situation for 12-dot Rhine from the starting point of a printing field.

[0102] As shown in drawing 14, the dot line which adjoins in the direction of vertical scanning also with the gestalt of this operation is formed of a mutually different nozzle. In addition, with the gestalt of this operation, since the count of a scan of a main scanning direction is set as S=2, the dot line which follows a main scanning direction is formed of two horizontal scanning. That is, the dot which adjoins the main scanning direction of each dot line is formed of a mutually different nozzle. It is printed by the so-called overlap.

[0103] If it puts in another way, since the same raster will be scanned twice, not only overlap but overlap printing of other classes shown in drawing 14 can also be performed. That is, much more multi-gradation printing can also be performed by piling up a new dot further on the dot which formed the dot line which continued by the first horizontal scanning, and was already formed of next horizontal scanning.

[0104] B-4. Explain the gestalt of operation of the 4th of the 1st printing method of this invention based on drawing 15 of operation of the 4th of the 1st printing method. The description of the gestalt of this operation is in the point that only predetermined distance shifted two or more actuator units also to the main scanning direction.

[0105] As shown in drawing 15, the print head in the gestalt of this operation consists of two or more actuator units 51. Each actuator unit 51 is formed by arranging two or more nozzles in the direction of vertical scanning in the predetermined nozzle pitch k, respectively.

[0106] And each [these] actuator unit 51 has estranged only the predetermined distance WL to the main scanning direction while being arranged in the condition of having been shifted in the direction of vertical scanning so that the distance between the nozzles which approach most mutually may serve as predetermined between-groups distance pn-D.

[0107] Thus, the same effectiveness as the gestalt of the 1st operation in which only the number of each actuator unit 51 could be obtained, and mentioned the nozzle group above also with the gestalt of this implementation constituted can be acquired. Moreover, with the gestalt of this operation, since the actuator unit 51 is shifted to a main scanning direction and it is made to lap in the direction of vertical scanning, the vertical-scanning lay length dimension of the print head can be shortened.

[0108] B-5. Explain the gestalt of operation of the 5th of the 1st printing method of this invention based on the 1st gestalt, next drawing 16 of operation of the 5th of a printing method. The description of the gestalt of this operation is in the point in which the print head was formed, by arranging the actuator unit equipped with the even number nozzle train and the odd number nozzle train in the direction of vertical scanning.

[0109] That is, the print head 61 concerning the gestalt of this operation is equipped with four nozzle arrays 62 estranged and arranged in the main scanning direction. Each [these] nozzle 62 is taking charge of an ink color predetermined in each like black, cyanogen, a Magenta, yellow, and the ink droplet of the same color is breathed out from each nozzle array 62, respectively.

[0110] Each nozzle array 62 is constituted by arranging two or more actuator units 63 in the direction of vertical scanning, even number nozzle train 63a and odd number nozzle train 63b to which each actuator unit 63 comes to arrange two or more nozzles by nozzle pitch 2-k-D in the direction of vertical scanning, respectively -- a main scanning direction -- alienation -- it is formed by arranging. Moreover, the clearance between the nozzles which approach most among each nozzle of the actuator unit 63 which adjoins mutually is set up so that it may become predetermined between-groups distance pn-D.

[0111] Thus, the same effectiveness as the gestalt of the 1st operation mentioned above also with the gestalt of this implementation constituted can be acquired. In addition, with the gestalt of this operation, since the nozzle pitch is large, the high density print head can be easily manufactured with many nozzles, and a manufacturing cost can be reduced.

[0112] If the nozzle of one N contained in a nozzle group can form the dot of one N which does not necessarily need to be located in a line in the shape of a straight line, and is located in

a line with about 1 train along the direction of vertical scanning in the fixed pitch k, it is good so that the example of drawing 16 may show.

[0113] In addition, if it is this contractor, modification, addition, correction, deletion, etc. can be suitably carried out to the gestalt of each operation of the 1st printing method mentioned above in the range which does not deviate from the range of this invention. For example, although the gestalt of each operation described the case where a dot was formed from the main scanning direction as the 1st scanning direction, it can also consider as the configuration which performs printing from vertical scanning not only as this but as the 2nd scanning direction.

[0114] Moreover, with the gestalt of each operation of the 1st printing method, although the serial printer was illustrated, it can apply to a line printer etc. and can apply to facsimile apparatus, a reproducing unit, etc. Furthermore, various functions, such as a facsimile function, are applicable also to the compound airline printer made to compound-size.

[0115] Since the distance pn between groups between a dot formative element group and a dot formative element group is changed with the minimum element pitch k of the dot formative element in a dot formative element group according to the 1st printing method of this invention so that clearly from the above explanation, the print head which has many dot formative elements can be formed easily. Furthermore, since each parameters N, M, S, and k are chosen so that $N/(M-S)$ and k/M may serve as mutual base, and a printing record medium is made to convey by the dot pitch N/S twice the constant pitch of D, even when the element pitch of a dot formative element changes by the part in the print head with mediation of the distance pn between groups, the so-called interface printing can be performed.

[0116] C. The thing almost same as a hardware configuration of the 2nd printing method of a gestalt of operation of the 1st of the operation gestalt C-1. 2nd printing method of the 2nd printing method as the hardware configuration of the 1st printing method shown in drawing 8 - drawing 9 can be used. Drawing 17 is the explanatory view showing the situation of the printing processing by the gestalt of operation of the 1st of the 2nd printing method.

[0117] In the print head 71, 1st nozzle group 71a as a "dot formative element group" and 2nd nozzle group 71b estranged only predetermined between-groups distance pn-D, and are arranged in the direction of vertical scanning. This between-groups distance pn-D means the distance which corresponds by pn time the dot pitch D, and pn is chosen as positive integers other than k.

[0118] Each nozzle groups 71a and 71b are equipped with the nozzle as a "dot formative element" of one N (the example of illustration N=5), respectively. If it puts in another way, grouping of the nozzle of N individual ($N=N1+N2=10$) is carried out to two nozzle groups 71a and 71b.

[0119] Here, the numbers N of nozzles are four or more integers, and the number N of nozzles and the number M of nozzle groups (two or more integers) are inequalities.

[0120] The amount of conveyances of the printing record medium SP boiled and twisted to the vertical-scanning mechanical component 4 is $N/(M-S)$ twice the value of a dot pitch D ($N/D/(M-S)$). The so-called interface printing method is realized by this constant pitch medium conveyance mode of operation.

[0121] Here, in order to make an adjoining dot form by different nozzle, said parameters N, M, S, and k need to fulfill the conditions "N/(M-S) and k are relatively prime." Count M-S of a raster scan which is the product of the number M of nozzle groups and the count S of a group scan is the factor of the number N of nozzles, and since the nozzle pitch k is a positive integer, both $N/(M-S)$ and k are integers. In the example shown in drawing 17, if it is the count $S=1$ of a group scan, since it will be set to $N/(M-S)=10/(2-1)=5$ and will be set to $k=4$, it has the relation of relatively prime. Here, the count S of a group scan means the count to which each nozzle group scans, respectively, and count M-S of a raster scan is a count of a scan to form one dot line (namely, one raster) of a main scanning direction of each scan by each nozzle group. These parameters have satisfied condition C3a mentioned above, C3b, and C3c.

[0122] By energizing to the print head 71 based on the printing image data stored in the data storage section 6, the print head mechanical component 7 (drawing 8) makes the printing record medium SP breathe out ink, and, thereby, obtains the printing result based on print data

from the predetermined nozzle of 1st nozzle group 71a and 2nd nozzle group 71b.

[0123] In the 2nd printing method, the horizontal-scanning rate managed table 8 (drawing 2) controls dynamically the horizontal-scanning rate VS as "1st scanning direction rate" according to count M-S of a raster scan of a main scanning direction. That is, it matches with each print mode from which count M-S of a scan differs, and the horizontal-scanning rate VS which is the passing speed of the print head 71 is memorized by the horizontal-scanning rate managed table 8. Here, if the horizontal-scanning rate VS 1 of the case of the count S=1 of a group scan, i.e., when the dot line of a main scanning direction is formed by one scan by one nozzle group, is made into a criteria rate, it is set up so that the horizontal-scanning rate VS may increase according to the scale factor of the count S of a group scan. Namely, the horizontal-scanning rate VS 2 at the time of S=2 is set up the twice of the criteria rate VS 1, and the horizontal-scanning rate VS 3 at the time of S=3 is set up by 3 times the criteria rate VS 1. However, as for this invention, a setup etc. may increase not only this but the horizontal-scanning rate VS 2 at the time of S=2 1.5 times of the criteria rate VS 1. Although it is desirable to make it increase in proportion to the number M of nozzle groups as for a horizontal-scanning rate, you make it be proportional to the count S of a group scan, without being dependent on the number M of nozzle groups.

[0124] With the gestalt of operation shown in drawing 17, they are M=2 nozzle groups, N=10 nozzles, the nozzle pitch k=4, between-groups distance pn=5, the count S=1 of a group scan, and amount Nof vertical scanning/(M-S) (=10/2=5) as above-mentioned.

[0125] In each horizontal-scanning pass, each nozzle of each nozzle groups 71a and 71b can form a dot by carrying out the regurgitation of the ink droplet, respectively. A dot line cannot be densely formed in the direction of vertical scanning until the relative location of the print head 71 and the printing record medium SP reaches position relation, since constant pitch vertical scanning of N/(M-S) dot pitch is performed for every horizontal scanning. That is, the location of #A4 nozzle in the 1st horizontal-scanning pass P1 is the starting point of a printing field. Moreover, in order that each nozzle groups 71a and 71b may perform interlace printing, respectively, each raster of a printing field is formed of each nozzle groups 71a and 71b, respectively. That is, in the 2nd printing method of this invention, since the so-called overlap printing is performed, each raster in a printing field is formed using both nozzle groups 71a and 71b.

[0126] Drawing 18 is the explanatory view expanding and showing the dot formation situation for 10-dot Rhine from the starting point of a printing field. As shown in drawing 18, since it is the count S=1 of a group scan, with the gestalt of this operation, each dot line of a main scanning direction is formed of horizontal scanning of one each by each nozzle groups 71a and 71b. [0127] That is, each dot line consists of a dot (** mark) formed of nozzle group 71a, and a dot (O mark) formed of nozzle group 71b. Moreover, the dot line which adjoins in the direction of vertical scanning is formed of a nozzle different, respectively.

[0128] Thus, the following effectiveness is done so with the gestalt of this implementation illustrated.

[0129] Since the print head 71 is formed by carrying out grouping of two or more nozzles (nozzle actuator) to two or more nozzle groups 71a and 71b, and only a different distance pn between groups from the nozzle pitch k making the 1st estrange each nozzle groups 71a and 71b, and arranging in it, the print head 71 equipped with many nozzles can be obtained easily. That is, since it is sufficient if the nozzle pitch k is secured only within each nozzle group 71a and 71b, the yield improves and a manufacturing cost decreases.

[0130] N/(M-S) and k become the relation of relatively prime the 2nd — as — several use nozzles — N, the number M of nozzle groups, the count S of a group scan, and the nozzle pitch k can be chosen, and the print head 71 from which a nozzle pitch differs partially can realize the so-called interlace printing for the configuration which performs N/(M-S) twice as many constant pitch vertical scanning as the dot pitch D in print resolution. Therefore, an adjoining dot line can be formed by mutually different nozzle, the variation in a nozzle property can be distributed, and high-definition printing can be performed.

[0131] With the gestalt of this operation, each raster in a printing field can be scanned to the 3rd

by each nozzle groups 71a and 71b, respectively, and the so-called overlap printing can be performed to it.

[0132] Since the print head 71 is formed by arranging two or more actuator units in which two or more nozzle actuators were installed successively with the nozzle pitch k the 4th in the direction of vertical scanning, respectively in the direction of vertical scanning, the print head of many nozzles can be obtained stably. Moreover, the print head 71 of the various numbers of nozzles can be obtained only by modification etc. carrying out the number of the actuator units to be used.

[0133] That what is necessary is just positive integers other than the nozzle pitch k, since the other limit is not imposed, especially the distance pn between groups can obtain the print head 71 of many nozzles easily by accumulation of an actuator unit.

[0134] In addition, with the gestalt of this operation, since it is overlapping by shifting 1 dot of locations of the dot formed with each nozzles 71a and 71b to a main scanning direction for every 1-dot Rhine of the direction of vertical scanning, a dot can be formed in the shape of [so-called] a checker. However, it can also constitute so that not only this but the formation location of the dot mentioned later according to each nozzle group like the gestalt of the 2nd operation may be arranged in the direction of vertical scanning.

[0135] C-2. Explain the gestalt of operation of the 2nd of the 2nd printing method of this invention based on the 2nd gestalt next drawing 19, and drawing 20 of operation of the 2nd of a printing method. The description of the gestalt of this operation is in the point of having divided all nozzles into three nozzle groups.

[0136] That is, the print head 81 of the gestalt of this operation consists of the 1st nozzle group 81a in which three nozzles were arranged in the nozzle pitch k, the 2nd nozzle group 81b, and the 3rd nozzle group 81c, respectively. Moreover, only between-groups distance pn-D is estranged, respectively between 1st nozzle group 81a and 2nd nozzle group 81b and between 2nd nozzle group 81b and 3rd nozzle group 81c. Each parameter of the gestalt of this operation is N=9 nozzles to be used, M=3 nozzle groups, the count S=1 of a group scan, the nozzle pitch k=4, and between-groups distance pn=5. Therefore, since it is N/(M-S)=9/(3-1)=3 and k=4, N/(M-S) and k are relatively prime.

[0137] In addition, although nozzle group 81a, a distance of nozzle group 81b between groups, and nozzle group 81b and a distance of nozzle group 81c between groups are set as pn with the gestalt of this operation, respectively, the distance pn between groups may be a value from which each distance between groups differs mutually that what is necessary is just integers other than k, it is because each nozzle groups 81a, 81b, and 81c scan a raster independently, respectively and interlace printing is performed.

[0138] The location of #A1 nozzle in the 3rd horizontal-scanning pass P3 serves as the starting point of a printing field, and can form a dot line in the direction of vertical scanning densely from here as shown in drawing 19 in the case of the gestalt of this operation. Drawing 20 is the explanatory view expanding and showing the dot formation situation for 8-dot Rhine from the starting point of a printing field. As shown in drawing 20, the dot line which adjoins in the direction of vertical scanning is formed of a nozzle different, respectively.

[0139] Therefore, the same effectiveness as the gestalt of operation of the 1st of the 2nd printing method mentioned above can be acquired also with the gestalt of this implementation constituted in this way.

[0140] C-3. Explain the gestalt of operation of the 3rd of the 2nd printing method of this invention based on the 2nd gestalt next drawing 21, and drawing 22 of operation of the 3rd of a printing method. The description of the gestalt of this operation is that it forms the dot line of a main scanning direction by scanning each nozzle group twice to a main scanning direction.

[0141] That is, the print head 91 in the gestalt of this operation consists of 1st nozzle group 91a and 2nd nozzle group 91b which were arranged in the direction of vertical scanning through between-groups distance pn-D, and each nozzle groups 91a and 91b are formed by arranging six nozzles in the direction of vertical scanning by nozzle pitch k-D, respectively. Each parameter of the gestalt of this operation is N=12 nozzles to be used, M=2 nozzle groups, the count S=2 of a group scan, the nozzle pitch k=4, and between-groups distance pn=5. Therefore, since it is N/

$(M-S) = 12/(2-2) = 3$ and $k = 4$, $N/(M-S)$ and k are relatively prime.

[0142] As shown in drawing 21, with the gestalt of this operation, a printing field begins from the location of #A5 nozzle in the 3rd horizontal-scanning pass P3, and each dot line is formed, respectively of two horizontal scanning by each nozzle groups 91a and 91b. That is, in order that each nozzle groups 91a and 91b may scan each raster by a unit of 2 times, respectively ($S=2$), the dot line of a main scanning direction is constituted by a total of four kinds of dots of two kinds of dots shown by O mark of white and black, and two kinds of dots shown by * mark of white and black.

[0143] Drawing 22 is the explanatory view expanding and showing the dot formation situation for 6-dot Rhine from the starting point of a printing field. As shown in drawing 22, the dot which adjoins in the direction of vertical scanning also with the gestalt of this operation is formed of a mutually different nozzle. In addition, with the gestalt of this operation, since the count of a group scan of a main scanning direction is set as $S=2$, the dot line which follows a main scanning direction is formed of horizontal scanning of two each of each nozzle groups 91a and

Therefore, the dot which adjoins the main scanning direction of each dot line is formed of combination of four mutually different nozzles.

[0144] C-4. Explain the gestalt of operation of the 4th of the 2nd printing method of this invention based on the 2nd gestalt, next drawing 23 of operation of the 4th of a printing method. The description of the gestalt of this operation is that it carried out grouping of all the nozzles to two or more nozzle groups by stopping some nozzles using a single actuator unit.

[0145] Namely, the print head 101 in the gestalt of this operation is formed from the single actuator unit 102, and two or more nozzles are arranged in the direction of vertical scanning by this actuator unit 102 by predetermined nozzle pitch $k-D$. And with the gestalt of this operation, all nozzles are divided into 1st nozzle group 101a and 2nd nozzle group 101b by stopping the predetermined nozzle 103 shown by the dotted line among all nozzles.

[0146] By stopping the predetermined nozzle 103, the distance pn of each nozzle groups 101a and 101b between groups becomes twice the nozzle pitch k .

[0147] Thus, the same effectiveness as the gestalt of operation of the 1st of the 2nd printing method mentioned above also with the gestalt of this implementation constituted can be acquired. In addition, with the gestalt of this operation, all nozzles are divided into two or more nozzle groups 101a and 101b by stopping some nozzles, even when defect nozzles, such as an omission, arise to the actuator unit 102 for the configuration to which characteristic interface printing of this invention is made to carry out, this defect nozzle can be stopped and interface printing can be performed.

[0148] C-5. Explain the gestalt of operation of the 5th of the 2nd printing method of this invention based on the 2nd gestalt next drawing 24, and drawing 25 of operation of the 5th of a printing method. The description of the gestalt of this operation divides the nozzle of N individual into the block of BN individual, and is that it constituted M nozzle groups ($M=N/BN$) by the rule of the same ranking within this each block.

[0149] Drawing 24 is the explanatory view showing the configuration of the print head 111 in the gestalt of this operation etc., and the print head 111 divides the nozzle of N individual ($N=10$) into the block of BN individual ($BN=2$), and is formed. That is, the nozzle pitch k within each block is 4, and the interblock distance pb during each block is 5. Therefore, physical arrangement of each nozzle is the same as that of what is depended on the gestalt of operation of the 1st of the 2nd printing method shown in drawing 17.

[0150] However, with the gestalt of this operation, the configuration unit on the drive control for carrying out drive control of each nozzle, i.e., the configuration of a nozzle group, differs from the gestalt of the 1st operation. Since the nozzle of a N/BN individual ($N/BN=10/2=5$) is contained in each block, the 1st - the N/BN ranking can be assigned to the nozzle of each block, respectively.

[0151] If it bases and explains to drawing 24, the print head 111 is constituted by two blocks 112, 113, and each block 112, 113 has every five nozzles, respectively. Five ranking to a-e is assigned to the nozzle within each block, respectively. That is, the 1st block 112 is constituted by five nozzles to a1-e1, and the 2nd block 113 is constituted by five nozzles to a2-e2.

[0152] Two nozzles of the same ranking within block 112, 113 constitute one nozzle group from the gestalt of this operation. That is, it has the 4th nozzle group of 111d set to 1st nozzle group 111a which consists of nozzles a1 and a2, 2nd nozzle group 111b which consists of nozzles b1 and b2, and 3rd nozzle group 111c which consists of nozzles c1 and c2 from nozzles d1 and d2, and a total of five nozzle groups of 5th nozzle group 111e and ** which consist of nozzles e1 and e2.

[0153] With the gestalt of this operation which constitutes the nozzle groups 111a-111e by the nozzle of the same ranking within each block 112, 113, the pitches between two nozzles in each nozzle group (namely, effective nozzle pitch) are lk and $(M-1) \cdot pb$. Therefore, it can print by interface by choosing said N, M, S, k, and pb so that $N/(M-S)$ and lk and $(M-1) \cdot pb$ may become the relation of relatively prime, and performing constant pitch vertical scanning of $N/(M-S)$. In the example shown in drawing 24, $N=10$, $M=5$ ($N/BN=10/2=5$). Since it is $k=4$, $pb=5$, and $S=1$, they are $N/(M-S)=10/5=2$, and k and $(M-1) \cdot pb=4 \cdot (5-1)=16$ (it is set to $+5=2$) and $N/(M-S)$ and lk and $(M-1) \cdot pb$ stand on the relation of relatively prime. Moreover, the amount of vertical scanning is $10/(5-1)=2$ dots.

[0154] In addition, in the printing method shown in drawing 24, a pitch between groups is k and the pitches between the nozzles which are two of each nozzle group are lk and $(M-1) \cdot pb$. Although condition C3b about a distance between groups mentioned above has not satisfied this operation gestalt, condition C3a and C3c are satisfied.

[0155] Thus, with the gestalt of this implementation constituted, as shown in drawing 25, a dot line can be densely formed from the part in which the 2nd nozzle a2 of 1st nozzle group 111a in the 11th horizontal-scanning pass is located.

[0156] In addition, although the nozzle which belongs to each block 112, 113 with O mark and * mark is distinguished in drawing 24, since a printing control top does not need to distinguish each block 112, 113, it has not distinguished whether in drawing 25, each nozzle belongs to block [which]. Moreover, in drawing 25, the affiliation nozzle group, the count of horizontal-scanning pass, and the nozzle number are shown in the circle of each dot. "b1-2 [namely,]" means being formed with the horizontal-scanning pass of the "11th" time by the 2nd nozzle ("2") of the 2nd nozzle group ("b").

[0157] Thus, also with the gestalt of this implementation constituted, the dot line which adjoins in the direction of vertical scanning can be formed by mutually different nozzle like the gestalt of each above-mentioned implementation, and fine printing can be performed.

[0158] Also in the 2nd printing method, it is also possible to use the print head 51 (drawing 15) of the 4th operation gestalt of the 1st printing method mentioned above and the print head 61 (drawing 16) of the 5th operation gestalt of the 1st printing method.

[0159] In addition, if it is this contructor, modification, addition, correction, deletion, etc., can be suitably carried out to the gestalt of each operation of the 2nd printing method mentioned above in the range which does not deviate from the range of this invention. For example, although the gestalt of each operation described the case where a dot was formed from the main scanning direction as the 1st scanning direction, it can also consider as the configuration which performs printing from vertical scanning not only as this but as the 2nd scanning direction.

[0160] Moreover, in the 2nd printing method of this invention, since each raster can be scanned by each dot formative element group, not only overlap but overlap printing of other classes shown in the gestalt of each operation can also be performed. That is, much more multi-gradation printing can also be performed by piling up a new dot further on the dot which formed the dot line which continued by the first horizontal scanning, and was already formed of next horizontal scanning.

[0161] Furthermore, with the gestalt of each operation of the 2nd printing method, although the serial printer was illustrated, it can apply to a line printer etc. and can apply to facsimile apparatus, a reproducing unit, etc. Furthermore, various functions, such as a facsimile function, are applicable also to the compound airline printer made to compound-size.

[0162] Since the distance pn between groups between a dot formative element group and a dot formative element group is changed with the minimum element pitch k of the dot formative element in a dot formative element group according to the 2nd printing method of this invention

so that clearly from the above explanation, the print head which has many dot formative elements can be formed easily. Furthermore, since each parameters N , M , S , and k are chosen so that $N/(M-S)$ and the minimum element pitch k may serve as mutual base, and a printing record medium is made to convey by the dot pitch $N/(M-S)$ twice the constant pitch of D , even when the element pitch of a dot formative element changes by the part in the print head with mediation of the distance p_n between groups, the so-called interlace printing can be performed.

[0163] Moreover, in the 2nd printing method of this invention, since the distance p_n between groups can perform interlace printing that what is necessary is just positive integers other than the minimum element pitch k even if the distance p_n between groups differs by each dot formative element between groups, it can obtain easily the print head equipped with many dot formative elements.

[0164] In addition, this invention can be carried out in various modes in the range which is not restricted to an above-mentioned example or an above-mentioned operation gestalt, and does not deviate from that summary, for example, the following deformation is also possible for it.

[0165] (1) You may make it transpose a part of configuration of that hardware was realized to software, and may make it transpose a part of configuration of that software realized to hardware conversely in the above-mentioned example.

[Translation done.]

* NOTICES *

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1. This document has been translated by computer. So the translation may not reflect the original precisely.
- 2.*** shows the word which can not be translated.
- 3.In the drawings, any words are not translated.

DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

[Brief Description of the Drawings]

- [Drawing 1] It is the explanatory view showing interface printing by the conventional technique.
- [Drawing 2] It is an explanatory view to show the fundamental conditions of a printing method using one nozzle group.
- [Drawing 3] It is an explanatory view to show the fundamental conditions of a printing method in case the count S of a scan is two or more.
- [Drawing 4] It is an explanatory view to show the fundamental conditions of the 1st printing method using two or more nozzle groups.
- [Drawing 5] It is an explanatory view to show the fundamental conditions of the 2nd printing method using two or more nozzle groups.
- [Drawing 6] It is the mimetic diagram showing the whole airline printer configuration concerning the 1st operation gestalt of the 1st printing method of this invention.
- [Drawing 7] It is the top view showing the structure of the print head.
- [Drawing 8] It is the sectional view showing the situation of the printing processing by the gestalt of operation of the 1st of the 1st printing method.
- [Drawing 9] It is the explanatory view expanding and showing the dot formation situation of drawing 9.
- [Drawing 11] It is the explanatory view showing the situation of printing processing of the airline printer concerning the gestalt of operation of the 2nd of the 1st printing method.
- [Drawing 12] It is the explanatory view expanding and showing the drawing 11 dot formation situation.
- [Drawing 13] It is the explanatory view showing the situation of printing processing of the airline printer concerning the gestalt of operation of the 3rd of the 1st printing method.
- [Drawing 14] It is the explanatory view expanding and showing the dot formation situation of drawing 13.
- [Drawing 15] It is the explanatory view showing the situation of printing processing of the airline printer concerning the gestalt of operation of the 4th of the 1st printing method of this invention.
- [Drawing 16] It is the explanatory view showing the situation of printing processing of the airline printer concerning the gestalt of operation of the 5th of the 1st printing method.
- [Drawing 17] It is the explanatory view showing the situation of the printing processing by the gestalt of operation of the 1st of the 2nd printing method of this invention.
- [Drawing 18] It is the explanatory view expanding and showing the dot formation situation of drawing 17.
- [Drawing 19] It is the explanatory view showing the situation of printing processing of the airline printer concerning the gestalt of operation of the 2nd of the 2nd printing method.
- [Drawing 20] It is the explanatory view expanding and showing the dot formation situation of drawing 19.
- [Drawing 21] It is the explanatory view showing the situation of printing processing of the airline printer concerning the gestalt of operation of the 3rd of the 2nd printing method.

[Drawing 22] It is the explanatory view expanding and showing the dot formation situation of drawing 21.

[Drawing 23] It is the explanatory view showing the situation of printing processing of the airline printer concerning the gestalt of operation of the 4th of the 2nd printing method.

[Drawing 24] It is the explanatory view showing the configuration of the print head of the airline printer concerning the gestalt of operation of the 5th of the 2nd printing method etc.

[Drawing 25] It is the explanatory view expanding and showing the dot formation situation of drawing 24.

[Description of Notations]

- 1 --- Ink jet printer
- 2 --- Print head
- 2a, 2b --- Nozzle group
- 3 --- Horizontal-scanning mechanical component
- 4 --- Vertical-scanning mechanical component
- 5 --- Mechanical-component control section
- 6 --- Data storage section
- 7 --- Print head mechanical component
- 8 --- Horizontal-scanning rate managed table
- 10 --- Actuator unit
- 11 --- Passage formation plate
- 12 --- Ink room
- 13 --- Ink feed hopper
- 14 --- Pressure room
- 15 --- Diaphragm
- 16 --- Island section
- 17 --- Piezoelectric transducer
- 20 --- Nozzle plate
- 21 --- Nozzle hole
- 31 --- Print head
- 31a, 31b, 31c --- 1st nozzle group
- 41 --- Print head
- 41a, 41b --- Nozzle group
- 51 --- Actuator unit
- 51 --- Print head
- 61 --- Print head
- 62 --- Nozzle array
- 63 --- Actuator unit
- 63a --- Even number nozzle train
- 63b --- Odd number nozzle train
- 71 --- Print head
- 71a, 71b --- Nozzle group
- 81 --- Print head
- 81a, 81b, 81c --- Nozzle group
- 91 --- Print head
- 91a, 91b --- Nozzle group
- 100 --- Print head
- 101 --- Print head
- 101a, 101b --- Nozzle group
- 102 --- Actuator unit
- 103 --- Nozzle
- 111 --- Print head
- 111a-111e --- Nozzle group
- 112, 113 --- Block

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[Translation done.]
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媒体の少なくとも一方を前記第2の走査方向に搬送する、印刷装置。

【請求項10】 請求項9記載の印刷装置であって、前記印刷ヘッドは、それぞれN/M個のドット形成要素を有するM個のドット形成要素ユニットを前記第2の走査方向に前記時間距離 $p \cdot n_i \cdot D$ だけ離間させて配置することにより形成されており、

各ドット形成要素ユニットの前記N/M個のドット形成要素は、前記第2の走査方向に前記最小要素ピッチ $k \cdot D$ と等しいピッチを有している、印刷装置。

【請求項11】 請求項10記載の印刷装置であって、前記第1の走査方向に前記第2の走査方向に前記最小要素ピッチ $k \cdot D$ の2倍の要素ピッチ $2 \cdot k \cdot D$ で形成された偶数ドット形成要素列及び奇数ドット形成要素列を、前記第1の走査方向に離間させて配置することにより形成されている、印刷装置。

【請求項12】 請求項9記載の印刷装置であって、

前記印刷ヘッドにおいて前記第2の走査方向に前記最小要素ピッチ $k \cdot D$ で配置された複数のドット形成要素のうち一部のドット形成要素を休止させることにより前記M個のドット形成要素が形成されている、印刷装置。

【請求項13】 請求項9記載の印刷装置であって、前記第1の走査運動前は、前記スキヤン回数M・Sに応じた第1の走査方向速度によって前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第1の走査方向に駆動する、印刷装置。

【請求項14】 請求項1記載の印刷装置であって、前記M個のドット形成要素は、それぞれM個のドット形成要素を含むB個 (BNはN/Mに等しい整数) のアローグに区分されており、隣接するアローグは互いにアローグ間距離 $p \cdot b \cdot D$ ($p \cdot b$ は k と不等の正の整数) だけ離れているとともに、各アローグにおける対応するドット形成要素によって前記M個のドット形成要素が形成されており、

各アローグ内の前記M個のドット形成要素は、前記第2の走査方向に沿った各走査において、前記第2の走査方向に沿ってほぼ一列に並ぶ同一のM個のドット形成要素が要素ピッチ $k \cdot D$ で形成することが可能であり、前記第1の走査方向をM・S回 (Sは正の整数) スキヤンして前記第1の走査方向のドットラインを形成するとき、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ と $(k \cdot (M-1) + p \cdot b)$ とが互いに素の関係になるように前記N、M、S、 k 、 $p \cdot b$ を選択し、

前記第2の走査運動前は、前記ドットピッチDのN/(M・S) 倍の送り量で前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第2の走査方向に搬送する、印刷装置。

【請求項15】 請求項14記載の印刷装置であって、前記印刷ヘッドは、それぞれM個のドット形成要素を有

するB個のドット形成要素ユニットを前記第2の走査方向に前記アローグ間距離 $p \cdot b \cdot D$ だけ離間させて配置することにより形成されており、

各ドット形成要素ユニットの前記M個のドット形成要素は、前記第2の走査方向に前記最小要素ピッチ $k \cdot D$ と等しいピッチを有している、印刷装置。

【請求項16】 請求項15記載の印刷装置であって、前記各ドット形成要素ユニットは、それぞれ複数のドット形成要素が前記第2の走査方向に前記最小要素ピッチ $k \cdot D$ の2倍の要素ピッチ $2 \cdot k \cdot D$ で形成された偶数ドット形成要素列及び奇数ドット形成要素列を、前記第1の走査方向に離間させて配置することにより形成されている、印刷装置。

【請求項17】 請求項14記載の印刷装置であって、

前記印刷ヘッドにおいて前記第2の走査方向に前記最小要素ピッチ $k \cdot D$ で配置された複数のドット形成要素のうち一部のドット形成要素を休止させることにより前記B個のアローグが形成されている、印刷装置。

【請求項18】 請求項14記載の印刷装置であって、前記第1の走査運動前は、前記スキヤン回数M・Sに応じた第1の走査方向速度によって前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第1の走査方向に駆動する、印刷装置。

【請求項19】 印刷ヘッドと印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を第1の走査方向に移動させつつ前記印刷媒体媒体上の印刷領域内でドットを形成するとともに、前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第1の走査方向とは直交する第2の走査方向に移動させる印刷装置を用いて印刷を行う印刷方法であって、

前記印刷ヘッドはN個 (Nは4以上の整数) のドット形成要素を備え、前記印刷ヘッド内における隣接する2つのドット形成要素間の前記第2の走査方向に沿った最小要素ピッチは $k \cdot D$ (k は整数、Dは印刷解像度に相当するドットピッチ) であり、

前記N個のドット形成要素はそれぞれN/M個のドット形成要素を含むM個 (MとN/Mはそれぞれ2以上の整数) のドット形成要素群に分類されており、前記M個のドット形成要素群の中の1番目 (iは1〜(M-1)の整数) と (i+1) 番目のドット形成要素群とは群間ピッチ $p \cdot b_i \cdot D$ ($p \cdot b_i$ は前記 k とは異なる整数) だけ

前記第2の走査方向にずれており、前記ドットピッチDの2倍以上の一定の送り量で前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第2の走査方向に搬送し、

前記M個のドット形成要素群が同一のドット形成可能位置パターンを有するように、かつ、前記M個のドット形成要素群のそれぞれの前記ドット形成可能位置パターンを互いにシフトさせることによって前記印刷領域のすべてのドット位置でドットが形成可能になるように、前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体とを駆動する、印刷方法

法。

【請求項20】 請求項19記載の印刷方法であって、隣接するドット形成要素群は、前記第2の走査方向に沿って間隔を空けて分類されており、

各ドット形成要素群の前記N/M個のドット形成要素は、前記第1の走査方向に沿った各走査において、前記第2の走査方向に沿ってほぼ一列に並ぶ同一のN/M個のドットを前記最小要素ピッチ $k \cdot D$ で形成することが可能である、印刷方法。

【請求項21】 請求項20記載の印刷方法であって、前記M個のドット形成要素群のそれぞれの前記同一パターンは、Mドットのピッチで周期的に配列された前記第1の走査方向の複数のドットラインで構成される、印刷方法。

【請求項22】 請求項21記載の印刷方法であって、前記i番目と (i+1) 番目のドット形成要素群との間には時間距離 $p \cdot n_i \cdot D$ ($p \cdot n_i$ は整数) だけ離れており、前記 $p \cdot n_i$ は1番目からi番目までの値 $p \cdot n_1 \sim p \cdot n_i$ の累積値 ($\sum p \cdot n_i$) をノズル群数Mで除した余り (M-1) 個の値が1〜(M-1) の互いに異なる値を取るように設定されており、

前記第1の走査方向をS回 (Sは正の整数) であって、M・SはNの因数) スキヤンして前記第1の走査方向のドットラインを形成するとき、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ と k/M とが互いに素の関係になるように前記N、M、S、 k を選択し、

前記ドットピッチDのN/S倍の送り量で前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第2の走査方向に搬送する、印刷方法。

【請求項23】 請求項22記載の印刷方法であって、前記スキヤン回数Sに応じた第1の走査方向速度によって前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第1の走査方向に駆動する、印刷方法。

【請求項24】 請求項20記載の印刷方法であって、前記M個のドット形成要素群のそれぞれの前記同一パターンは、前記第1の走査方向の各ドットラインにおいてMドットのピッチで周期的に配列された複数のドットで構成される、印刷方法。

【請求項25】 請求項24記載の印刷方法であって、前記第1の走査方向をM・S回 (Sは正の整数) であって、M・SはNの因数) スキヤンして前記第1の走査方向のドットラインを形成するとき、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ と k とが互いに素の関係になるように前記N、M、S、 k を選択し、

前記ドットピッチDのN/(M・S) 倍の送り量で前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第2の走査方向に搬送する、印刷方法。

【請求項26】 請求項25記載の印刷方法であって、前記スキヤン回数M・Sに応じた第1の走査方向速度によって前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一

方を前記第1の走査方向に駆動する、印刷方法。

【請求項27】 請求項19記載の印刷方法であって、前記M個のドット形成要素は、それぞれM個のドット形成要素を含むB個 (BNはN/Mに等しい整数) のアローグに区分されており、隣接するアローグは互いにアローグ間距離 $p \cdot b \cdot D$ ($p \cdot b$ は k と不等の正の整数) だけ離れているとともに、各アローグにおける対応するドット形成要素によって前記M個のドット形成要素が形成されており、

前記各アローグ内の前記M個のドット形成要素は、前記第1の走査方向に沿った各走査において、前記第2の走査方向に沿ってほぼ一列に並ぶ同一のM個のドットを前記最小要素ピッチ $k \cdot D$ で形成することが可能であり、

前記第1の走査方向をM・S回 (Sは正の整数) スキヤンして前記第1の走査方向のドットラインを形成するとき、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ と $(k \cdot (M-1) + p \cdot b)$ とが互いに素の関係になるように前記N、M、S、 k 、 $p \cdot b$ を選択し、

前記ドットピッチDのN/(M・S) 倍の送り量で前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第2の走査方向に搬送する、印刷方法。

【請求項28】 請求項27記載の印刷方法であって、前記スキヤン回数M・Sに応じた第1の走査方向速度によって前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第1の走査方向に駆動する、印刷方法。

【請求項29】 印刷ヘッドと印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を第1の走査方向に移動させつつ前記印刷媒体媒体上の印刷領域内でドットを形成するとともに、前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第1の走査方向とは直交する第2の走査方向に移動させる印刷装置を制御するコンピュータ読み取り可能な記録媒体であって、

前記印刷ヘッドはN個 (Nは4以上の整数) のドット形成要素を備え、前記印刷ヘッド内における隣接する2つのドット形成要素群の間の前記第2の走査方向に沿った最小要素ピッチは $k \cdot D$ (k は整数、Dは印刷解像度に相当するドットピッチ) であり、

前記N個のドット形成要素はそれぞれN/M個のドット形成要素を含むM個 (MとN/Mはそれぞれ2以上の整数) のドット形成要素群に分類されており、前記M個のドット形成要素群の中の1番目 (iは1〜(M-1)の整数) と (i+1) 番目のドット形成要素群とは群間ピッチ $p \cdot b_i \cdot D$ ($p \cdot b_i$ は前記 k とは異なる整数) だけ

前記第2の走査方向にずれており、前記ドットピッチDの2倍以上の一定の送り量で前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第2の走査方向に搬送するように前記コンピュータを動作させる第1のプログラムと。

【請求項30】 請求項29記載の記録媒体であって、前記コンピュータは、前記第1のプログラムを実行して、前記第1の走査方向に移動させつつ前記印刷媒体媒体上の印刷領域内でドットを形成するとともに、前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第1の走査方向とは直交する第2の走査方向に移動させる印刷装置を制御するコンピュータ読み取り可能な記録媒体であって、

り形成されているようにしてもよい。

【0020】2個のドット形成要素群を第1の走査方向に並べ配置することにより、各ドット形成要素群における最小要素ピッチを、一列で形成する場合の2倍(=2k・D)にすることができ、従って、1つのドット形成要素群ユニットに多くのドット形成要素を容易に形成することができ。

【0021】前記第1の走査駆動部は、前記スキャン回数Sに於いた第1の走査方向速度によって前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷記録媒体の少なくとも一方を前記第1の走査方向に駆動するようにしてもよい。

【0022】例えば、スキャン回数Sを2に設定した場合(S=2)は、第1の走査方向の連続したドットラインを2回のスキャンによって形成することになる。従って、印刷ヘッドまたは印刷記録媒体の送り速度(第1の走査方向速度)がS=1の場合と同一であれば、印刷速度が十分に低下する。そこで、スキャン回数Sに応じて印刷ヘッドまたは印刷記録媒体の送り速度を動的に変化させることにより、印刷スループットを低下させることなく高品位の印刷画質を得ることができ、ここで、スキャン回数Sに於いた第1の走査方向速度V₁とは、より詳しくは、スキャン回数Sに比例した第1の走査方向速度の意味である。第1の走査方向速度はスキャン回数Sに比例させることが好ましいが、本発明はこれに限定されない。

【0023】本発明の他の態様においては、前記M個のドット形成要素群のそれぞれの前記同一スキャンは、前記第1の走査方向の各ドットライン上においてMドットのドットで周期的に配列された複数のドットで構成される。

【0024】実施態様においては、前記i番目(i+1)番目のドット形成要素群との間は時間距離p_{n1}・D(p_{n1}は整数)だけ離れており、前記p_{n1}はkとは異なる整数値に設定される。また、前記第1の走査方向をM・S回(Sは正の整数であって、M・SはNの因数となる)回して前記第1の走査方向のドットラインを形成するとき、N/(M・S)とkとが互いに素の関係にあるように前記N、M、S、kを選択し、前記第2の走査駆動部は、前記ドットピッチDのN/(M・S)倍の送り量で前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷記録媒体の少なくとも一方を前記第2の走査方向に搬送する。

【0025】N個のドット形成要素をM個のドット形成要素群にグループ化し、各ドット形成要素群の時間距離p_{n1}・Dを上記のように設定した場合には、各ドット形成要素群内で所定の最小要素ピッチ・Dを実現していいない、換言すれば、所定の最小要素ピッチ・Dでドット形成要素が配列されたドット形成要素群を重複化することにより、多数のドット形成要素を有する印刷ヘッドを容易に得ることができ。

【0026】そして、N/(M・S)とkとが互いに素

の関係になるように前記N、M、S、kを選択し、第2の走査駆動部によって、ドットピッチDのN/(M・S)倍の送り量で前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷記録媒体の少なくとも一方を第2の走査方向に搬送させることにより、隣接するドットラインを互いに異なるドット形成要素によって形成することができ、また、印刷領域内の各ラスタは、各ドット形成要素群によってそれぞれ走査されるため、いわゆるオーバーラップ印刷を行うことができる。

【0027】前記印刷ヘッドにおいて前記第2の走査方向に前記最小要素ピッチ・Dで配列された複数のドット形成要素のうち一部のドット形成要素を休止させることにより前記M個のドット形成要素群が形成されているようにしてもよい。

【0028】つまり、所定の最小要素ピッチ・Dで複数のドット形成要素を形成しておき、一部のドット形成要素を使用しないことにより、複数のドット形成要素群を得ることができ、この場合、時間距離p_{n1}・Dは最小要素ピッチ・Dの倍数であり、これにより、例えば、ドット形成要素群の一部に特性劣化や抜け等の不良が生じた場合に、当該ドット形成要素を休止させることによって、本発明によるインテラレース印刷を行うこともできる。

【0029】印刷装置の他の態様では、前記N個のドット形成要素は、それぞれM個のドット形成要素を含むB個(BNはN/Mに等しい整数)のブロックに区別されており、隣接するブロックは互いにブロック間距離p_b・D(p_bはkと異なる正の整数)だけ離れており、各ブロックにおける対応するドット形成要素群によって前記M個のドット形成要素群が形成されており、前記各ブロック内の前記M個のドット形成要素は、前記第1の走査方向に沿った各走査において、前記第2の走査方向に沿ってほぼ一列に並ぶ同一のM個のドットを前記最小要素ピッチ・Dで形成することが可能であり、前記第1の走査方向をM・S回(Sは正の整数)スキャンして前記第1の走査方向のドットラインを形成するとき、N/(M・S)とkとが互いに素の関係にあるように前記N、M、S、k、p_bを選択し、前記第2の走査駆動部は、前記ドットピッチDのN/(M・S)倍の送り量で前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷記録媒体の少なくとも一方を前記第2の走査方向に搬送する。

【0030】例えば、10個のドット形成要素を2個のブロックに分けた場合(N=10、BN=2)を考える。各ブロックはそれぞれ5個のドット形成要素によって構成される(N/BN=10/2=5)。従って、各ブロック内には、第1番目のドット形成要素、第5番目のドット形成要素までの5個のドット形成要素がそれぞれ存在する。そこで、各ブロックの第1番目のドット形成要素同士、第2番目のドット形成要素同士、第

3番目のドット形成要素同士のように、各ブロック内における対応するドット形成要素をグループ化することにより、5つのドット形成要素群を構成することができ、このように、ドット形成要素群を構成した場合は、インテラレース方式によるオーバーラップ印刷を行うことができる。

【0031】前記印刷ヘッドにおいて前記第2の走査方向に前記最小要素ピッチ・Dで配列された複数のドット形成要素のうち一部のドット形成要素を休止させることにより前記B個のブロックが形成されているようにしてもよい。

【0032】また、前記第1の走査駆動部は、前記スキャン回数M・Sに於いた第1の走査方向速度によって前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷記録媒体の少なくとも一方を前記第1の走査方向に駆動するようにしてもよい。

【0033】ここで、M個のドット形成要素群は、同一のドットラインをそれぞれS回ずつスキャンすることになる。例えば、2個のドット形成要素群M1、M2が形成されている場合、印刷領域内の各ドットラインは、第1のドット形成要素群M1によってスキャンされると共に、第2のドット形成要素群M2によってもスキャンされる。そして、各ドット形成要素群M1、M2の各スキャンによって、第1の走査方向に連続したドットラインが形成される。従って、前記Sは、各ドット形成要素群がそれぞれスキャンする回数を示すものであるため、「各スキャン回数S」として表現することもできる。

【0034】さて、例えば、Sを2に設定した場合(S=2)は、第1の走査方向の連続したドットラインを2回のスキャンによって形成することになる。従って、印刷ヘッドまたは印刷記録媒体の送り速度(第1の走査方向速度)がS=1の場合と同一であれば、印刷速度が十分に低下する。そこで、スキャン回数M・Sに於いて印刷ヘッドの送り速度を動的に変化させることにより、印刷スループットを低下させることなく高品位の印刷画質を得ることができ。

【0035】ここで、「スキャン回数M・Sに於いた第1の走査方向速度」とは、より詳しくは、スキャン回数M・Sに於いて増加する第1の走査方向速度の意味である。第1の走査方向速度はスキャン回数M・Sに比例させることが好ましいが、本発明はこれに限定されない。

【0036】本発明は、また、印刷ヘッドと印刷記録媒体との少なくとも一方を第1の走査方向に移動させつつ前記印刷記録媒体上の印刷領域内でドットを形成するとともに、前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷記録媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第1の走査方向に直交する第2の走査方向に移動させる印刷装置を用いて印刷を行う印刷方法にも向けられている。この印刷方法では、前記ドットピッチDの2倍以上の一定の送り量で前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷記録媒体との少なくとも一方を前記第2の走査方向に搬送する。また、前記M個のドット形成要素群が同

一のドット形成可能位置パターンを有するように、かつ、前記M個のドット形成要素群のそれぞれの前記ドット形成可能位置パターンを互いにシフトさせることによって前記印刷領域内のすべてのドット位置でドットが形成可能になるように、前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷記録媒体とを駆動する。

【0037】本発明は、さらに、印刷ヘッドと印刷記録媒体の少なくとも一方を第1の走査方向に移動させつつ前記印刷記録媒体上の印刷領域内でドットを形成するとともに、前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷記録媒体の少なくとも一方を前記第1の走査方向とは直交する第2の走査方向に移動させる印刷装置を制御するコンピュータのために行われている。このコンピュータプログラムは、前記ドットピッチDの2倍以上の一定の送り量で前記印刷ヘッドと前記印刷記録媒体の一方を前記第2の走査方向に搬送するよう前記印刷コンピュータを動作させる第1のプログラムと、前記M個のドット形成要素群が同一のドット形成可能位置パターンを有するように、かつ、前記M個のドット形成要素群のそれぞれの前記ドット形成可能位置パターンを互いにシフトさせることによって前記印刷領域内のすべてのドット位置でドットが形成可能になるように、前記コンピュータを動作させる第2のプログラムと、を備える。

【0038】この発明は、以下のような他の態様も含んでいる。第1の態様は、コンピュータに上記の発明の各上記または各下の機能を実現させるコンピュータ装置としてのプログラムを介して供給するプログラム供給装置としての態様である。このような態様では、プログラムをネットワークをコンピュータに書き、通信経路を介して、必要なプログラムをコンピュータにダウンロードし、これを実行することで、上記の方法や装置を実現することができる。

【0039】 【発明の実施の形態】

A. 一般的な印刷方式の基本的条件
A-1. 1つのノズル群を用いた印刷方式の基本的条件
図2は、1つのノズル群を用いた印刷方式の基本的条件を示すための説明図である。図2(A)において、数字1【図】と、スキャン回数Sと、副走査送り量L【ピッチ】と、が含まれている。スキャン回数S【回】は、何回の走査で各ラスタをドットで埋めつくすかを示す回数である。図2の例では、1回の走査で各ラスタが埋

【0040】図2(B)には、この印刷方式に関する種々のパラメータが示されている。印刷方式のパラメータには、ノズルピッチk【ピッチ】と、使用ノズル個数N【個】と、スキャン回数Sと、副走査送り量L【ピッチ】と、が含まれている。スキャン回数S【回】は、何回の走査で各ラスタをドットで埋めつくすかを示す回数である。図2の例では、1回の走査で各ラスタが埋

めつくされているので、 $S=1$ である。

[00041] 図2の例では、ノズルペンチは3ポイントであり、使用ノズル個数N1は4個である。なお、使用ノズル個数N1は、実装されている複数回のノズルの中で実際に使用されるノズルの個数である。スキャン回数Sは、一回の走査において(1)ポイントおきに間欠的にポイントを形成することを意味している。従って、スキャン回数Sは、各スタ上のすべてのポイントを記録するために使用されるノズルの数にも等しい。

[00042] 図2(B)のテーブルには、各副走査リ毎に、副走査リ量Lと、その累計値ΣLと、各副走査リ後のノズルのオフセットFとが示されている。このオフセットFとは、副走査リが行われていない最期のノズルの周期的な位置(図2では4ポイントおきの位置)をオフセット0の基準位置と仮定した時に、副走査リ後のノズルの位置が基準位置から副走査リ方向に何ポイント離れた位置を示す値である。例えば、図2(A)に示すように、1回目の副走査リによって、ノズルの位置は副走査リ量L(4ポイント)だけ副走査リ方向に移動する。一方、ノズルペンチは3ポイントである。従って、1回目の副走査リ後のノズルのオフセットFは1である(図2(A)参照)。同様にして、2回目の副走査リ後のノズルの位置は、初期位置からΣL=8ポイント移動しており、そのオフセットFは2である。3回目の副走査リ後のノズルの位置は、初期位置からΣL=12ポイント移動しており、そのオフセットFは0である。3回の副走査リによってノズルのオフセットFは0に戻る。3回の副走査を1サイクルとして、このサイクルのポイントを記録することによって、印刷領域内のラスタ上のすべてのポイントを記録することができる。

[00043] 上記の例からも解るように、ノズルの位置が初期位置からノズルペンチの整数倍だけ離れた位置にある時には、オフセットFはゼロである。また、オフセットFは、副走査リ量Lの累計値ΣLをノズルペンチで割った余り(ΣL)%kと与えられる。ここで、kは、除算の剰余をとることを示す演算子である。

ノズルの初期位置を周期的な位置と考えれば、オフセットFは、ノズルの初期位置からの位置ずれ量を示しているものと考えられる。

[00044] スキャン回数Sが1で副走査リ量Lが一歩の場合には、記録されるラスタに抜けや重複が無いようにするために次の条件C1を満足する必要がある。

[00045] [条件C1] : 副走査リ量Lは使用ノズル数N1に等しく、かつ、副走査リ量L(=N1)とノズルペンチkとは互いに素の関係にある。

[00046] この条件C1は、次のように考えることによって理解できる。すなわち、ラスタの抜けが無いように記録を行うと、k回の走査の間にN1×k本のラスタが記録される。このとき、k回の副走査リ後のノズルの位置は、初期のノズル位置からN1×kラスタ分だけ

離れた位置に来るはずである。このようなノズル位置を実現するには、「副走査リ量Lを使用ノズル数N1に等しく」設定すればよい。また、記録されるラスタに抜けや重複が無いようにするためには、k回の各副走査リにおけるそれぞれのオフセットFの値が0～(k-1)の範囲の互いに異なる値を取る必要がある。このようなオフセットFの値を実現するには、「副走査リ量Lとノズルペンチkとは互いに素の関係に」設定すればよい。ここで、「互いに素の関係」とは、2つの整数が1以外の公約数を持たないことを意味する。上記の条件C1を満足することによって、記録されるラスタに抜けや重複を無くすることができる。

[00047] 図3は、スキャン回数Sが2以上の場合の印刷方式の基本的条件を示すための説明図である。図3に示す印刷方式は、図2(B)に示す印刷方式のバリエーションの中で、スキャン回数Sと副走査リ量Lとを整数化したものである。図3(A)からも解るように、図3の印刷方式における副走査リ量Lは2ポイントの一定値である。図3(A)においては、奇数回の副走査リ後の右端に示すように、奇数回の副走査リ後に記録されるポイント位置は、偶数回の副走査リ後の後に記録されるポイント位置と、主走査方向に1ポイント分だけずれている。従って、同一のラスタ上の複数のポイントは、異なる2つのノズルによってそれぞれ周期的に記録されることになる。例えば、印刷領域内の最上端のラスタは、1回目の副走査リ後に3番のノズルで1ポイントおきに周期的に記録された後に、4回目の副走査リ後に1番のノズルで1ポイントおきに周期的に記録される。このように、スキャン回数Sが2以上の場合には、同一のラスタがS本の異なるノズルで記録される。

[00048] 図3(B)のテーブルの最下段には、複数回の副走査後のオフセットFの値が示されている。1回目から6回目までの各回の副走査リ後のオフセットFは、0～2の範囲の値を2回ずつ含んでいる。

[00049] 一般に、スキャン回数Sが2以上の場合には、1本のラスタがS回の走査で記録されるので、実効的なノズル数がN1/Sになっているものと考えることができる。従って、副走査リ量Lは、この実効ノズル数N1/Sに等しく設定すればよい。すなわち、スキャン回数Sが2以上の整数の場合には、上述した条件C1は、以下の条件C1'のように書き換えられる。

[00050] [条件C1'] : 副走査リ量Lは実効ノズル数N1/Sに等しく、かつ、副走査リ量L(=N1/S)とノズルペンチkとは互いに素の関係にある。

[00051] この条件C1'においても副走査リ量Lとノズルペンチkとは互いに素の関係にあるので、k回の副走査リ後のオフセットFは、図3(B)にも示すように、0～(k-1)の範囲の異なる値を取る。また、k×S回の副走査リ後のオフセットFは、0～

(k-1)の範囲の異なる値をそれぞれS回ずつ取る。なお、スキャン回数Sは、N1/Sが1以上の整数となるように選ばれる。

[00052] 上記の条件C1'は、スキャン回数Sが1の場合にも成立する。従って、条件C1'は、スキャン回数の値に係わらず、1組のノズル群を用いて一定の送り量Lで副走査リを行う印刷方式に関して一般的に成立する条件である。但し、スキャン回数Sが2以上の場合には、同じラスタを記録するノズルの記録位置を互いに主走査方向にずらすという条件も必要である。

[00053] A-2. 複数のノズル群を用いた印刷方式の基本的条件:

図4は、複数のノズル群を用いた第1の印刷方式の基本的条件を示すための説明図である。M個のノズル群NG1～NGM(図4ではM=3)は、同じノズル配列を有しており、一定のノズルペンチkで記録されたN1個のノズルをそれぞれ有している。従って、M個のノズル群NG1～NGMの総ノズル数Nは、N1×Mに等しい。なお、i番目のノズル群NGiと(i+1)番目のノズル群NGi+1との間の距離(「群間距離」と呼ぶ)は、p_{ei}ポイントである。また、i番目のノズル群NGiと(i+1)番目のノズル群NGi+1との対応するノズルの間の距離(「群間ペンチ」と呼ぶ)は、p_{ei}ポイントである。

[00054] 図4の右側には、各ノズル群で記録されるラスタが区別されて示されている。これから解るように、第1の印刷方式では、各ノズル群が互いに異なるラスタを記録しており、各ノズル群で記録されるラスタは、Mポイントのペンチで周期的に配列されている(第1については後で詳述する)。すなわち、第1の印刷方式では、各ノズル群が記録を実行するラスタの配置は、Mポイントのペンチで周期的に配列された同一のパターンを示しており、この同一のパターンを各ノズル群毎に少しずらすことによって、印刷領域内のすべてのポイントを記録し得るようにしている。

[00055] 図4の印刷方式では、各ノズル群はノズルペンチkで配列された複数のノズルを用いて、Mポイントのペンチで配列されたラスタを記録している。副走査リ量Lは1つのノズル群を用いる場合の送り量N1/SのM倍になる。また、この印刷方式は、各ノズル群がノズルペンチ(k/M)のノズルを用いて1ポイントペンチのラスタを記録する印刷方式とはほぼ等価なので、実効ノズル数N1/Sとk/Mとは互いに素の関係に設定できる。このとき、上記条件C1'は、次のように書き換えられる。

[00056] [条件C2a] : 副走査リ量Lは実効ノズル数N1/SのM倍(=N/S)に等しく、かつ、実効ノズル数N1/S(=N/(M×S))と(k/M)とは互いに素の関係にある。

[00057] この条件C2aを満足すれば、各ノズル群は、Mポイントのペンチで配列されたラスタをそれぞれ記録することができる。なお、ノズルペンチkとノズル群数Mとは、(k/M)が1以上の整数となるように選ばれ、一方、図4の右側に示すように、各ノズル群で記録されるラスタ群が互いに少しずらすようにするには、以下に示す条件C2bを満足すればよい。

[00058] [条件C2b] : (Σp_{ei})%Mの(M-1)個の値が、1～(M-1)の互いに異なる値をとり、

[00059] ここで、(Σp_{ei})は、1番目からi番目(iは1～(M-1)の整数)までの群間距離p_{ei}～p_{ei-1}の累算値を示し、演算子「%」は除算の剰余をとる演算を示す。群間距離p_{ei}が上記の条件C2bを満たせば、(M-1)個の群間距離p_{ei}～p_{ei-1}は互いに等しい値でもない。

[00060] なお、条件C2bにおいて群間距離p_{ei}の代わりに群間ペンチp_{ei}を用いた次の条件C2cも成立する。

[00061] [条件C2c] : (Σp_{ei})%Mの(M-1)個の値が、1～(M-1)の互いに異なる値を取る。

[00062] 群間ペンチp_{ei}は1つのノズル群の両端のノズルの間の距離k×(N1-1)よりも小さくとり、一定の条件である。すなわち、条件C2bは、より一般的に条件C2cを満足する特定の条件に成立する条件である。

[00063] 図5は、複数のノズル群を用いた第2の印刷方式の基本的条件を示すための説明図である。この印刷方式においては、各ノズル群がすべてのラスタ上で記録を行い、各ノズル群は1ラスタの全ポイントのうち1/M個の点を担当する。換言すれば、1つのノズル群で記録されるポイントは、各ラスタ上においてMポイントのペンチで配置されている(このようにポイントがどのように配置されるか、については後で詳述する)。このような印刷方式は、各ノズル群がすべてのラスタ上で記録を実行するので、副走査リに関しては、図3に示した1つのノズル群のみを用いる印刷方式と同じ条件が成立する。

[00064] [条件C3a] : 副走査リ量Lは実効ノズル数N1/S(=N/(M×S))に等しく、かつ、副走査リ量L(=N/(M×S))とノズルペンチkとは互いに素の関係にある。

[00065] また、群間距離p_{ei}に関しては、上記条件C2bよりも緩やかな次の条件C3bを満たせばよい。

[00066] [条件C3b] : 群間距離p_{ei}はノズルペンチkとは異なる値を取る。

[00067] 同様に、群間ペンチp_{ei}に関しては、上

め、ノズルピッチが部分的に異なる印刷ヘッド2によって、いわゆるインターレース印刷を再現することができ、従って、隣接するドットラインを互いに異なるノズルによって形成することができ、ノズル特性のバラツキを分散させて高品位の印刷を行うことができる。

[0092] 第3に、それぞれ複数のノズルがアキュエータが駆動方向にノズルピッチをもって列設された複数のアキュエータユニット10を駆動方向に配設することにより印刷ヘッド2を形成するため、多ノズルの印刷ヘッドを安定的に導くことができる。また、使用するアキュエータユニット10の数を変更するだけで、異なるノズル数の印刷ヘッド2を得ることができる。

[0093] B-2. 第1の印刷方式の第2の実施形態では、図11及び図12に基づいて本発明の第1の印刷方式の第2の実施形態を説明する。なお、以下の各実施形態では、上述した第1の印刷方式の第1の実施形態を同一の構成要素には同一の符号を付し、その説明を省略するものとする。本実施形態の特徴は、全ノズルを3つのノズル群に分割した点にある。

[0094] 即ち、本実施形態の印刷ヘッド31は、それぞれ3個のノズルがノズルピッチで配設された第1のノズル群31a、第2のノズル群31b、第3のノズル群31cから構成されている。また、第1のノズル群31aと第2のノズル群31bとは第1の群間距離 p_{n1} ・Dだけ離隔しており、第2のノズル群31bと第3のノズル群31cとは第2の群間距離 p_{n2} ・Dだけ離隔している。本実施形態の各パラメータは、使用するノズル数 $N=9$ 、ノズル群数 $M=3$ 、スキャン回数 $S=1$ 、ノズルピッチ $k=6$ 、第1の群間距離 $p_{n1}=8$ 、第2の群間距離 $p_{n2}=5$ である。従って、 $N/(M \cdot S)=9/(3 \cdot 1)=3$ 、 $k/M=6/3=2$ であるから、これらは互いに素である。

[0095] ここで、本実施形態の形態のように、各ノズル群間で群間距離 p_{ni} がそれぞれ異なる場合は、下記式1に基づいて決定することが可能である。

$$[0096] p_{n1} = (p_{n2} + a \cdot M) \dots (式1)$$

、 a は整数

、一方の群間距離は p_{n1} 、他方の群間距離 p_{n2} に M の倍数を加えた値である。本実施形態の場合、第1の群間距離 p_{n1} は、 $p_{n1} = (p_{n2} + a \cdot M)$ 、 $(6+1 \cdot 3)=8$ として決定されている。なお、一般には、上述の条件 $C2b$ 「 $(2 \cdot p_{n1}) \% N$ の $(M-1)$ 個の値が、 $1 \sim (M-1)$ の互いに異なる値を取る」を満たせばよい。

[0097] 本実施形態の場合、図11に示す通り、3回目の主走査パスP3における#B2ノズルの位置が印刷領域の端点となり、ここからドットラインを駆動方向に順に形成することができ、図12は、印刷領域の端点から15ドットライン分のドット形成状況を拡大して示す説明図である。図12に示すように、駆動方向

向に隣接するドットラインは、それぞれ異なるノズルによって形成される。

[0098] 従って、このように構成される本実施形態でも、上述した第1の印刷方式の第1の実施形態と同様の効果を得ることができる。

[0099] B-3. 第1の印刷方式の第3の実施形態

次に、図13及び図14に基づいて本発明の第1の印刷方式の第3の実施形態を説明する。本実施形態の特徴は、主走査方向にスキャンすることにより主走査方向のドットラインを形成している点にある。

[0100] 即ち、本実施形態における印刷ヘッド41は、群間距離 p_{n1} ・Dを介して駆動方向に配設された第1のノズル群41aと第2のノズル群41bとからなり、各ノズル群41a、41bは、それぞれ駆動方向に6個のノズルをノズルピッチ k ・Dで配設することにより形成されている。本実施形態の各パラメータは、使用するノズル数 $N=12$ 、ノズル群数 $M=2$ 、スキャン回数 $S=2$ 、ノズルピッチ $k=4$ 、群間距離 $p_{n1}=5$ である。従って、 $N/(M \cdot S)=12/(2 \cdot 2)=3$ 、 $k/M=4/2=2$ であるから、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ と k/M とは互いに素である。

[0101] 図13に示すように、本実施形態では、5回目の主走査パスP5における#Bノズルの位置から印刷領域が始まり、各ドットラインは2回の主走査によってそれぞれ形成される。図14は、印刷領域の端点から12ドットライン分のドット形成状況を拡大して示す説明図である。

[0102] 図14に示すように、本実施形態でも、駆動方向に隣接するドットラインは互いに異なるノズルによって形成される。これに加えて、本実施形態では、主走査方向に連続するドットラインは、2回の主走査によって形成される。即ち、各ドットラインの主走査方向に隣接するドットは、互いに異なるノズルによって形成される。いわゆるオーバーラップによって印刷されるのである。

[0103] 換言すれば、同一のノズルを2回走査するため、図14に示すオーバーラップに換らず、他方の主走査によって連続したドットラインを形成し、次の主走査によって、既に形成されたドットの上に新たなドットを更に重ねることにより、より一層の多層印刷を行うこともできる。

[0104] B-4. 第1の印刷方式の第4の実施形態

図15に基づき本発明の第1の印刷方式の第4の実施形態を説明する。本実施形態の特徴は、複数のアキュエータユニットを主走査方向にも所定距離だけし点にある。

向に隣接するドットラインは、それぞれ異なるノズルによって形成される。

[0098] 従って、このように構成される本実施形態でも、上述した第1の印刷方式の第1の実施形態と同様の効果を得ることができる。

[0099] B-3. 第1の印刷方式の第3の実施形態

次に、図13及び図14に基づいて本発明の第1の印刷方式の第3の実施形態を説明する。本実施形態の特徴は、主走査方向にスキャンすることにより主走査方向のドットラインを形成している点にある。

[0100] 即ち、本実施形態における印刷ヘッド41は、群間距離 p_{n1} ・Dを介して駆動方向に配設された第1のノズル群41aと第2のノズル群41bとからなり、各ノズル群41a、41bは、それぞれ駆動方向に6個のノズルをノズルピッチ k ・Dで配設することにより形成されている。本実施形態の各パラメータは、使用するノズル数 $N=12$ 、ノズル群数 $M=2$ 、スキャン回数 $S=2$ 、ノズルピッチ $k=4$ 、群間距離 $p_{n1}=5$ である。従って、 $N/(M \cdot S)=12/(2 \cdot 2)=3$ 、 $k/M=4/2=2$ であるから、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ と k/M とは互いに素である。

[0101] 図13に示すように、本実施形態では、5回目の主走査パスP5における#Bノズルの位置から印刷領域が始まり、各ドットラインは2回の主走査によってそれぞれ形成される。図14は、印刷領域の端点から12ドットライン分のドット形成状況を拡大して示す説明図である。

[0102] 図14に示すように、本実施形態でも、駆動方向に隣接するドットラインは互いに異なるノズルによって形成される。これに加えて、本実施形態では、主走査方向に連続するドットラインは、2回の主走査によって形成される。即ち、各ドットラインの主走査方向に隣接するドットは、互いに異なるノズルによって形成される。いわゆるオーバーラップによって印刷されるのである。

[0103] 換言すれば、同一のノズルを2回走査するため、図14に示すオーバーラップに換らず、他方の主走査によって連続したドットラインを形成し、次の主走査によって、既に形成されたドットの上に新たなドットを更に重ねることにより、より一層の多層印刷を行うこともできる。

[0104] B-4. 第1の印刷方式の第4の実施形態

図15に基づき本発明の第1の印刷方式の第4の実施形態を説明する。本実施形態の特徴は、複数のアキュエータユニットを主走査方向にも所定距離だけし点にある。

向に隣接するドットラインは、それぞれ異なるノズルによって形成される。

[0105] 図15に示すように、本実施形態における印刷ヘッドは、複数のアキュエータユニット51から構成されている。各アキュエータユニット51は、それぞれ複数のノズルを駆動方向に所定のノズルピッチで配設することにより形成されている。

[0106] そして、これら各アキュエータユニット51は、互いに最も近接するノズル間の距離が所定の群間距離 p_{n1} ・Dとなるように駆動方向にすらされた状態で配設されていると共に、主走査方向に所定距離 W_L だけ離隔している。

[0107] このように構成される本実施形態でも、各アキュエータユニット51の数がノズル群を得ることにより、上述した第1の実施形態と同様の効果を得ることができる。また、本実施形態では、アキュエータユニット51を主走査方向にすらし、駆動方向に直交し、異なるようにして形成することにより、駆動方向の異なる走査方法を適用することができる。

[0108] B-5. 第1の印刷方式の第5の実施形態

次に、図16に基づいて本発明の第1の印刷方式の第5の実施形態を説明する。本実施形態の特徴は、偶数ノズル及び奇数ノズルを偶数ノズル群と奇数ノズル群とに分けて駆動方向に配設することにより印刷ヘッドを形成した点にある。

[0109] 即ち、本実施形態では偶数印刷ヘッド61は、主走査方向に離隔して配設された例えば4個のノズルをノズルピッチ k ・Dで配設している。これら各ノズル群41a、41bは、例えば、ラララ、ソソソ、マママ、イイイ等のように、それぞれが所定のインク色を担当しており、各ノズル群41a、41bは、同色のインクがそれぞれ吐出されるようになっている。

[0110] 各ノズル群41a、41bは、複数のアキュエータユニット63を駆動方向に配設することにより構成されている。各アキュエータユニット63は、それぞれ複数のノズルをノズルピッチ k ・Dで駆動方向に配設してなる偶数ノズル群63aと奇数ノズル群63bとを、主走査方向に離隔配置することにより形成されている。また、互いに隣接するアキュエータユニット63の各ノズルのうち最も近接するノズル間の群間距離 p_{n1} ・Dとなるように数定されている。

[0111] このように構成される本実施形態でも上述した第1の実施形態と同様の効果を得ることができる。これに加えて本実施形態では、ノズルピッチが大きいので、多ノズルで高密度印刷ヘッドを容易に製造することができる。

[0112] 図16の例から解るように、各ノズル群に含まれるN1個のノズルは、必ずしも一直線状に並んでいる必要はなく、駆動方向に沿ってほぼ一列に並ぶ1個のドットを一定のピッチで形成することが可能で

向に隣接するドットラインは、それぞれ異なるノズルによって形成される。

[0113] なお、当業者であれば、本発明の範囲から逸脱しない範囲で、上述した第1の印刷方式の各実施形態に修正、追加、修正、削除等を行うことができる。例えば、各実施形態では、第1の走査方向としての主走査方向からドットを形成する場合を述べたが、これに限らず、第2の走査方向としての副走査方向から印刷を行う場合とすることもできる。

[0114] また、第1の印刷方式の各実施形態では、ソラグラフタを例示したが、ライソグラフタ等にも適用することができる。ソラグラフタや複写装置等にも適用することができる。さらに、ソラグラフタ等の各種機能を複合化した複合印刷装置にも適用することができる。

[0115] 以上の説明から明かのように、本発明の第1の印刷方式によれば、ドット形成要素群とドット形成要素群との間の群間距離 p_{n1} を、ドット形成要素群内におけるドット形成要素の最小要素群ピッチと異なるため、多数のドット形成要素を有する印刷ヘッドを容易に形成することができる。さらに、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ と k/M が互いに素となるように各パラメータ N 、 M 、 S 、 k を選択し、ドットピッチ D の N/S 倍の定ピッチで印刷形成要素を搬送させるため、群間距離 p_{n1} の介在によってドット形成要素の要素群ピッチが印刷ヘッドの一部で異なる場合でも、いわゆるインターレース印刷を行うことができる。

[0116] C. 第2の印刷方式の実施形態

C-1. 第2の印刷方式の第1の実施形態

第2の印刷方式のハードウェア構成としては、図6〜図8に示した第1の印刷方式のハードウェア構成とはほぼ同じものを使用することができ、図17は、第2の印刷方式の第1の実施形態による印刷処理の様子を示す説明図である。

[0117] 印刷ヘッド71には、「ドット形成要素群」として第1のノズル群71aと第2のノズル群71bとが、駆動方向に所定の群間距離 p_{n1} ・Dだけ離隔して配設されている。この群間距離 p_{n1} ・Dは、ドットピッチ D の p_{n1} 倍に相当する距離の整数倍である。すなわち、 k 以外の正の整数として選択されるものである。

[0118] 各ノズル群71a、71bは、それぞれN1個（図17例では $N1=5$ ）の「ドット形成要素」としてのノズルを備えている。換言すれば、 $N(N=N1+N1=10)$ のノズルは、2個のノズル群71a、71bにグループ化されている。

[0119] ここで、ノズル数 N は、4以上の整数であり、ノズル数 N とノズル群数 M （2以上の整数）とは不等である。

[0120] 副走査方向4による印刷領域全体SPの搬送量は、ドットピッチ D の $N/(M \cdot S)$ 倍の値（ $N \cdot D/(M \cdot S)$ ）である。この定ピッチ媒体搬送

動作モードによって、いわゆるインターレース印刷方式が採用されている。

【0121】ここで、隣接するドットを異なるノズルによって形成させるためには、前記パラメータN、M、S、kは、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ とkとは互いに素である」という条件を満たす必要がある。ノズル数Mと群スキャン回数Sとの積であるラスタスキャン回数M・Sはノズル数Nの因数であり、また、ノズルピッチkは正の整数であるから、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ とkとは共に整数である。図17に示す例では、群スキャン回数S=1とすると、 $N/(M \cdot S) = 10/(2 \cdot 1) = 5$ となり、 $k = 4$ となるため、互いに素の関係にある。ここで、群スキャンSとは、各ノズル群がそれぞれ群スキャンを行う回数を意味し、ラスタスキャン回数M・Sとは、各ノズル群による各スキャンによって、主走査方向の1本のドットライン（すなわち1本のラスタ）が形成されるためのスキャン回数である。これらのパラメータは、上述した条件C3a、C3b、C3cを満たしている。

【0122】印刷ヘッド駆動部7（図6）は、データ格納部6に格納される印刷イメージデータに基づいて印刷ヘッド71に送達すること、第1のノズル群71a及び第2のノズル群71bの所定のノズルから印刷記録媒体SPにインクを吐出させ、これにより印刷データに基づいた印刷結果を得るようになっている。

【0123】第2の印刷方式においては、主走査速度管理ツール8（図2）は、第1の主走査方向速度）としての主走査速度VSを主走査方向のラスタスキャン回数M・Sに応じて動的に制御する。即ち、主走査速度管理ツール8には、スキャン回数M・Sの異なるそれぞれの印刷イメージデータに対して、印刷ヘッド71の移動速度である主走査速度VSが記憶されている。ここで、群スキャン回数S=1の場合、つまり、一つのノズル群により主走査方向のドットラインを1回の走査で形成する場合の主走査速度VS1を基準速度とすると、群スキャン回数Sの倍率に応じて主走査速度VSが増大するように調整されている。即ち、S=2のときの主走査速度VSは基準速度VS1の2倍に設定されており、S=3のときの主走査速度VS3は基準速度VS1の3倍に設定されている。しかし、本発明はこれに限らず、例えば、S=2のときの主走査速度VS2を基準速度VS1の1.5倍に設定等してもよい。主走査速度は、ノズル群数Mに比例して増大させることが好ましいが、ノズル群数Mに依存せずに、群スキャン回数Sのみに比例するようにしてもよい。

【0124】上述の通り、図17に示す実施の形態では、ノズル群数M=2、ノズル数N=10、ノズルピッチk=4、群間距離pn=5、群スキャン回数S=1、副走査距離p（M・S）（=10/2=5）である。

【0125】各主走査パスにおいて、各ノズル群71a、71bの各ノズルは、それぞれインク滴を吐出する

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ことによりドットを形成することができる。主走査線N/(M・S)ドットピッチの定ピッチ副走査が行われるため、印刷ヘッド71と印刷記録媒体SPとの相対的位置が所定の位置関係に遷移するまで、ドットラインを副走査方向に密に形成することができない。即ち、1回目の主走査パスP1における#A4ノズルの位置が印刷領域の始点である。また、各ノズル群71a、71bは、それぞれインターレース印刷を実行するため、印刷領域の各ラスタは各ノズル群71a、71bによってそれぞれ形成される。即ち、本発明の第2の印刷方式では、いわゆるオーバーバンプ印刷が行われるため、印刷領域内の各ラスタは、両方のノズル群71a、71bを用いて形成される。

【0126】図18は、印刷領域の始点から10ドットライン分のドット形成状況を拡大して示す説明図である。図18に示すように、本実施の形態では、群スキャン回数S=1であるため、主走査方向の各ドットラインは、各ノズル群71a、71bによるそれぞれ1回の主走査によって形成されている。

【0127】即ち、各ドットラインは、ノズル群71aにより形成されるドット（口印）とノズル群71bにより形成されるドット（○印）とから構成されている。また、副走査方向に隣接するドットラインは、それぞれ異なるノズルによって形成されている。

【0128】このように構成される本実施の形態では、以下の効果を奏する。

【0129】第1に、複数のノズル（ノズルグループ）を複数のノズル群71a、71bにグループ化し、各ノズル群71a、71bをノズルピッチkと異なる群間距離pnで離間させて配置することにより印刷ヘッド71を形成しているため、多数のノズルを備えた印刷ヘッド71を容易に得ることができる。即ち、各ノズル群71a、71b内でのみ、ノズルピッチkを調整すれば足りるため、歩留まりが向上し、製造コストが低減する。

【0130】第2に、N/(M・S)とkとは互いに素の関係になるように使用ノズル数N、ノズル群数M、群スキャン回数S、ノズルピッチkを選択し、印刷領域内におけるドットピッチDのN/(M・S)倍の定ピッチ副走査を行う構成のため、ノズルピッチが部分的に異なる印刷ヘッド71によって、いわゆるインターレース印刷を実現することができ、従って、隣接するドットラインを互いに異なるノズルによって形成することができ、ノズル特性のバラツキを分散させて高品質の印刷を行うことができる。

【0131】第3に、本実施の形態では、印刷領域内の各ラスタを各ノズル群71a、71bによってそれぞれ走査することができ、いわゆるオーバーバンプ印刷を行うことができる。

【0132】第4に、それぞれ異なるノズルグループ

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ードが副走査方向にノズルピッチkをもって列設された複数のラスタユニットを副走査方向に配設することにより印刷ヘッド71を形成するため、多ノズルの印刷ヘッドを安定的に得ることができる。また、使用するラスタユニットの数を従って変更するだけで種々のノズル数の印刷ヘッド71を得ることができる。

【0133】特に、群間距離pnは、ノズルピッチk以外の正の整数であればよく、それ以外の制約は課せられないため、ラスタユニットの集積によって多ノズルの印刷ヘッド71を容易に得ることができる。

【0134】なお、本実施の形態では、各ノズル71a、71bで形成するドットの位置を副走査方向の1ドットライン毎に主走査方向に1ドットずらすことにより、オーバーラップを行っているため、いわゆる市松模様のドットを形成できる。但し、これに限らず、後述する第3の実施の形態のように、各ノズル群によるドットの形成位置を副走査方向に錯綜するように構成することもできる。

【0135】C-2、第2の印刷方式の第2の実施の形態

次に、図19及び図20に基づいて本発明の第2の印刷方式の第2の実施の形態を説明する。本実施の形態の特徴は、全ノズルを3つのノズル群に分割した点にある。

【0136】即ち、本実施の形態の印刷ヘッド81は、それぞれ3個のノズルがノズルピッチkで配設された第1のノズル群81a、第2のノズル群81b、第3のノズル群81cから構成されている。また、第1のノズル群81aと第2のノズル群81bとの間、第2のノズル群81bと第3のノズル群81cとの間は、それぞれ群間距離pn・Dだけ離間している。本実施の形態の各パラメータは、使用するノズル数N=9、ノズル群数M=3、群スキャン回数S=1、ノズルピッチk=4、群間距離pn=5である。従って、 $N/(M \cdot S) = 9/(3 \cdot 1) = 3$ 、 $k = 4$ であるから、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ とkとは互いに素である。

【0137】なお、本実施の形態では、ノズル群81aとノズル群81bの群間距離と、ノズル群81bとノズル群81cの群間距離とを、それぞれpnに設定しているが、群間距離pnはk以外の整数であればよく、各群間距離が互いに異なる値であってもよい。尚ながら、各ノズル群81a、81b、81cは、それぞれ独立にラスタを走査してインターレース印刷を実行するからである。

【0138】本実施の形態の場合、図19に示す通り、3回目の主走査パスP3における#A1ノズルの位置が印刷領域の始点となり、ここからドットラインを副走査方向に密に形成することができる。図20は、印刷領域の始点から8ドットライン分のドット形成状況を拡大して示す説明図である。図20に示すように、副走査方向に隣接するドットラインは、それぞれ異なるノズルによ

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って形成される。

【0139】従って、このように構成される本実施の形態でも、上述した第2の印刷方式の第1の実施の形態と同様の効果を得ることができる。

【0140】C-3、第2の印刷方式の第3の実施の形態

次に、図21及び図22に基づいて本発明の第2の印刷方式の第3の実施の形態を説明する。本実施の形態の特徴は、各ノズル群を主走査方向に2回スキャンすることにより主走査方向のドットラインを形成している点にある。

【0141】即ち、本実施の形態における印刷ヘッド91は、群間距離pn・Dを介して副走査方向に配設された第1のノズル群91aと第2のノズル群91bとからなり、各ノズル群91a、91bは、それぞれ副走査方向に6個のノズルをノズルピッチk・Dで配設することにより形成されている。本実施の形態の各パラメータは、使用するノズル数N=12、ノズル群数M=2、群スキャン回数S=2、ノズルピッチk=4、群間距離pn=5である。従って、 $N/(M \cdot S) = 12/(2 \cdot 2) = 3$ 、 $k = 4$ であるから、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ とkとは互いに素である。

【0142】図21に示すように、本実施の形態では、3回目の主走査パスP3における#A5ノズルの位置から印刷領域が始まり、各ドットラインは、各ノズル群91a、91bによる2回の主走査によってそれぞれ形成される。つまり、各ノズル群91a、91bは、各ラスタをそれぞれ2回ずつ走査するため（S=2）、主走査方向のドットラインは、白及び低の口印で示す2種類のドットと、白及び黒の口印で示す2種類のドットとの合計4種類のドットによって構成される。

【0143】図22は、印刷領域の始点から6ドットライン分のドット形成状況を拡大して示す説明図である。図22に示すように、本実施の形態では、副走査方向に隣接するドットは互いに異なるノズルによって形成される。これに加えて、本実施の形態では、主走査方向のスキャン回数をS=2に設定しているため、主走査方向に隣接するドットラインは、各ノズル群91a、91bのそれぞれ2回の主走査によって形成される。従って、各ドットラインの主走査方向に隣接するドットは、互いに異なる4つのノズルの組み合わせによって形成される。

【0144】C-4、第2の印刷方式の第4の実施の形態

次に、図23に基づいて本発明の第2の印刷方式の第4の実施の形態を説明する。本実施の形態の特徴は、単一のラスタユニットを用い、一部のノズルを休止させる点にあり、全ノズルを複数のノズル群にグループ化した点にある。

【0145】即ち、本実施の形態における印刷ヘッド1

011は、単一のアクチュエータユニット102から形成されており、該アクチュエータユニット102には、複数のノズルが副走方向に所定のノズルピッチ $k \cdot D$ で配設されている。そして、本実施形態では、全ノズルのうち点検で示す所定のノズル103を休止させることにより、全ノズルを第1のノズル群101aと第2のノズル群101bとに分けていいる。

[0146] 所定のノズル103を休止させることにより、各ノズル群101a、101bの間隔距離 p_n は、ノズルピッチ k の2倍となる。

[0147] このように構成される本実施形態でも上記した第2の印刷方式の第1の実施形態と同様の効果を得ることができる。これに加えて、本実施形態で一部のノズルを休止させることにより、全ノズルを複数のノズル群101a、101bに分割し、本発明の特定のインターレース印刷を行わせる構成のため、アクチュエータユニット102に掛け等の不良ノズルが生じた場合でも、該不良ノズルを休止させてインターレース印刷を行うことができる。

[0148] C-5、第2の印刷方式の第5の実施形態は、次に、図24及び図25に基づいて本発明の第2の印刷方式の第5の実施形態を説明する。本実施形態の特徴は、 N 個のノズルを B 個のグループに分割し、該各グループ内の同一順位のノズルによって M 個 ($M=N/B$) のノズル群を構成した点にある。

[0149] 図24は、本実施形態における印刷ヘッド111の構成等を示す説明図であって、印刷ヘッド111は、 N 個 ($N=10$) のノズルを B 個 ($B=N/2$) のグループに分けて形成されている。即ち、各グループ内におけるノズルピッチ k は4であり、各グループ間の物理的距離 p は5である。従って、各ノズルの物理的配置は、図17に示す第2の印刷方式の第1の実施形態によるものと同一である。

[0150] しかし、本実施形態では、各ノズルを駆動させるための駆動制御上の構成は、即ち、ノズルが形成される第1の実施形態とは異なる。各グループに含まれているため、各グループのノズルには、第1番目～第 N/B 番目の順位をそれぞれ割り当てることができ

る。

[0151] 図24に即して説明すると、印刷ヘッド111は、2個のグループ112、113によって構成されており、各グループ112、113は、それぞれ5個ずつのノズルを有している。各グループ内のノズルは、それぞれ $a \sim e$ までの5つの順位が割り当てられている。つまり、第1のグループ112は、 $a1 \sim e1$ までの5個のノズルによって構成され、第2のグループ113は、 $a2 \sim e2$ までの5個のノズルによって構成されている。

[0152] 本実施形態では、グループ112、113内における同一順位の2つのノズルによって1つのノズル群を構成している。即ち、ノズル $a1$ 、 $a2$ からなる第1のノズル群111aと、ノズル $b1$ 、 $b2$ からなる第2のノズル群111bと、ノズル $c1$ 、 $c2$ からなる第3のノズル群111cと、ノズル $d1$ 、 $d2$ からなる第4のノズル群111dと、ノズル $e1$ 、 $e2$ からなる第5のノズル群111eと、の合計5つのノズル群を備えている。

[0153] 各グループ112、113内の同一順位のノズルによってノズル群111a～111eを構成する本実施形態では、各ノズル群における2つのノズルの間のピッチ(すなわち実効的なノズルピッチ)は、 $(k \cdot (M-1) + p)$ である。従って、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ と $(k \cdot (M-1) + p)$ とが互いに素の関係になるように前記 N 、 M 、 S 、 k 、 p を選択し、かつ、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ の定ピッチ副走を行うことにより、インターレース方式で印刷を行うことができる。図24に示す例では、 $N=10$ 、 $M=5$ ($N/B=N/2=5$)、 $k=4$ 、 $p=5$ 、 $S=1$ であるから、 $N/(M \cdot S) = 10/5 = 2$ 、 $(k \cdot (M-1) + p) = (4 \cdot (5-1) + 5) = 21$ となり、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ と $(k \cdot (M-1) + p)$ とは互いに素の関係に立っている。また、副走量は、 $10/(5 \cdot 1) = 2$ ボットである。

[0154] なお、図24に示す印刷方式では、群間ピッチ k であり、各ノズル群内の2つのノズルの間のピッチが $(k \cdot (M-1) + p)$ である。本実施形態は、群間距離に関する上述した条件C3bは満足していないが、条件C3a、C3cは満足している。

[0155] このように構成される本実施形態では、図25に示すように、第1回目の主走パスにおける第1のノズル群111aの第2ノズル $a2$ が位置する箇所からポットラインを密に形成することができる。

[0156] なお、図24中では、O印と口印によって各グループ112、113に属するノズルを区別しているが、印刷制御上は各グループ112、113の区別をする必要はないため、図25中では、各ノズルがいずれのグループに属するかの区別をしていない。また、図25中では、各ポットの円内に、所属ノズル名、主走パスの回数、ノズル番号を示している。即ち、例えば、 $[b11-2]$ は、第2のノズル群(「b1」)の第2ノズル(「-2」)により、「11」回目の主走パスで形成されることを意味する。

[0157] このよう構成される本実施形態でも、上記各実施形態と同様に、副走方向に隣接するポットラインを互いに異なるノズルによって形成することができ、高品質印刷を行うことができる。

[0158] 第2の印刷方式においても、前述した第1の印刷方式の第4の実施形態の印刷ヘッド51(図1

5) や、第1の印刷方式の第5の実施形態の印刷ヘッド61(図16)を用いることも可能である。

[0159] なお、当業者であれば、本発明の範囲から逸脱しない範囲で、上述した第2の印刷方式の各実施形態に適宜変更、追加、修正、削除等を行うことができる。例えば、各実施形態では、第1の副走方向としての主走方向からポットを形成する場合を述べたが、これに限らず、第2の副走方向としての副走方向から印刷を行う構成とすることもできる。

[0160] また、本発明の第2の印刷方式では、各ノズルをポット形成要素群によって副走させることができるため、各実施形態に示すオーバーラップに限らず、他の種類のオーバーラップ印刷を行うこともできる。つまり、最初の主走で連続したポットラインを形成し、次の副走によって、既に形成されたポットの上に新たなポットを更に重ねることにより、より層の多層印刷を行うこともできる。

[0161] さらに、第2の印刷方式の各実施形態では、ソリッドプリントを例示したが、ラインプリント等にも適用することができる。つまり、ソリッドプリント等にも適用することができる。さらに、ソリッドプリント機能等の各種機能を複合化させた複合印刷装置にも適用することができる。

[0162] 以上の説明から明らかなように、本発明の第2の印刷方式によれば、ポット形成要素群とポット形成要素群との間の群間距離 p_n を、ポット形成要素群内におけるポット形成要素の最小要素ピッチ k と違えるため、多数のポット形成要素を有する印刷ヘッドを容易に形成することができる。さらに、 $N/(M \cdot S)$ と最小要素ピッチ k とが互いに素となるように各グループ N 、 M 、 S 、 k を選択し、ポットピッチ D の $N/(M \cdot S)$ 倍の定ピッチで印刷駆動機構を搬送させるため、群間距離 p_n の介在によってポット形成要素の要素ピッチが印刷ヘッド内の一部分で異なる場合でも、いわゆるインターレース印刷を行うことができる。

[0163] また、本発明の第2の印刷方式では、群間距離 p_n は最小要素ピッチ k 以外の正の整数であればよく、各ポット形成要素群間で群間距離 p_n が異なっているとしてもインターレース印刷を行うことができるため、多数のポット形成要素を備えた印刷ヘッドを容易に得ることができる。

[0164] なお、この説明は上記の実施例や実施形態に限られるものではなく、その要旨を逸脱しない範囲において種々の態様において実施することが可能であり、例えば、次のような変形も可能である。

[0165] (1) 上記実施形態において、オーバーラップによって実現されていた構成の一部をソリッドプリントに置き換えるようにしてもよく、逆に、ソリッドプリントによって実現されていた構成の一部をオーバーラップに置き換えるようにしてもよい。

【図面の簡単な説明】

【図1】従来技術によるインターレース印刷を示す説明図である。

【図2】1つのノズル群を用いた印刷方式の基本的条件を示すための説明図である。

【図3】スクリーン回数 S が2以上の場合の印刷方式の基本的条件を示すための説明図である。

【図4】複数のノズル群を用いた第1の印刷方式の基本的条件を示すための説明図である。

【図5】複数のノズル群を用いた第2の印刷方式の基本的条件を示すための説明図である。

【図6】本発明の第1の印刷方式の第1の実施形態に係る印刷装置の全体構成を示す模式図である。

【図7】印刷ヘッドの構造を示す断面図である。

【図8】第1の印刷方式の第1の実施形態による印刷処理の様子を示す説明図である。

【図9】第1の印刷方式の第2の実施形態による印刷処理の様子を示す説明図である。

【図10】第2の印刷方式の第1の実施形態による印刷処理の様子を示す説明図である。

【図11】第1の印刷方式の第2の実施形態に係る印刷装置の印刷処理の様子を示す説明図である。

【図12】図11ポット形成状況を拡大して示す説明図である。

【図13】第1の印刷方式の第3の実施形態に係る印刷装置の印刷処理の様子を示す説明図である。

【図14】図13のポット形成状況を拡大して示す説明図である。

【図15】本発明の第1の印刷方式の第4の実施形態に係る印刷装置の印刷処理の様子を示す説明図である。

【図16】第1の印刷方式の第5の実施形態に係る印刷装置の印刷処理の様子を示す説明図である。

【図17】本発明の第2の印刷方式の第1の実施形態による印刷処理の様子を示す説明図である。

【図18】図17のポット形成状況を拡大して示す説明図である。

【図19】第2の印刷方式の第2の実施形態に係る印刷装置の印刷処理の様子を示す説明図である。

【図20】図19のポット形成状況を拡大して示す説明図である。

【図21】第2の印刷方式の第3の実施形態に係る印刷装置の印刷処理の様子を示す説明図である。

【図22】図21のポット形成状況を拡大して示す説明図である。

【図23】第2の印刷方式の第4の実施形態に係る印刷装置の印刷処理の様子を示す説明図である。

【図24】第2の印刷方式の第5の実施形態に係る印刷装置の印刷ヘッドの構成等を示す説明図である。

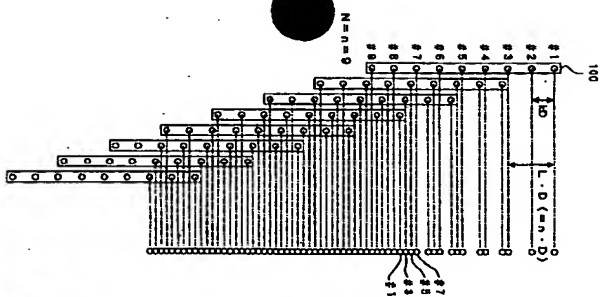
【図25】図24のポット形成状況を拡大して示す説明図である。

【符号の説明】

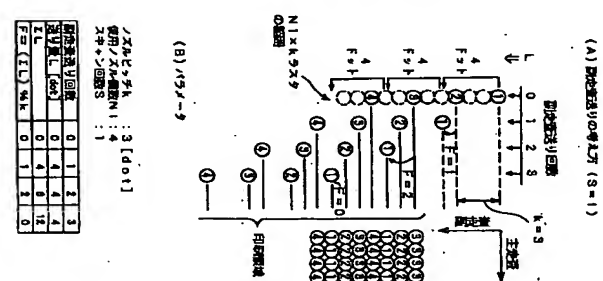
- 1…イソノジェントリンタ
2…印刷ヘッド
2 a, 2 b…ズル替
3…主送堂駆動部
4…斜走堂駆動部
5…駆動部制御部
6…データ格納部
7…印刷ヘッド駆動部
8…主送速度管理デュール
10…フタチューエタユニット
11…流路形成板
2…イソノタ
…イソノ供給口
4…圧力室
15…駆動板
16…イソノド部
17…圧電振動子
20…ズルプレート
21…ズル穴
31…印刷ヘッド
31a, 31b, 31c…第1のズル替
41…印刷ヘッド

- 41a, 41b…/ズル群
51…アクチャエータユニット
51…印刷ヘツト
61…印刷ヘツト
62…/ズルアレイ
63…アクチャエータユニット
63a…偶数/ズル列
63b…奇数/ズル列
71…印刷ヘツト
71a, 71b…/ズル群
81…印刷ヘツト
81a, 81b, 81c…/ズル群
91…印刷ヘツト
91a, 91b…/ズル群
100…印刷ヘツト
101…印刷ヘツト
101a, 101b…/ズル群
102…アクチャエータユニット
103…/ズル
111…印刷ヘツト
111a~111f…/ズル群
112, 113…アック

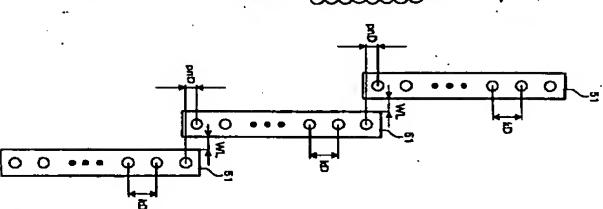
【圖1】



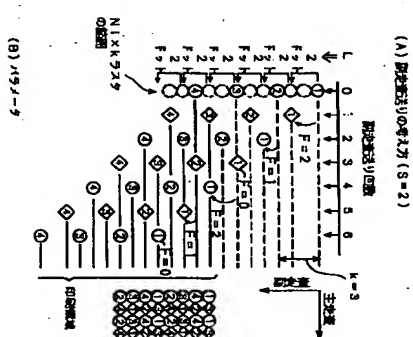
【圖2】



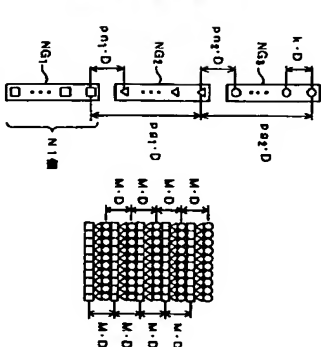
【例 15】



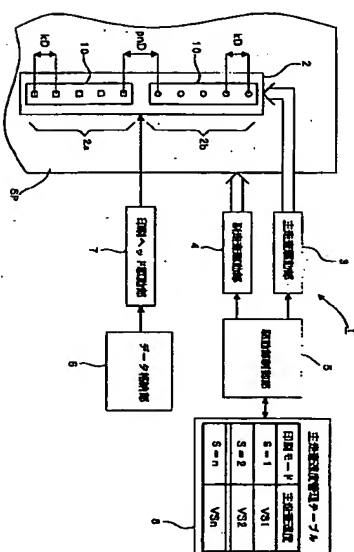
【例 3】



【圖 4】

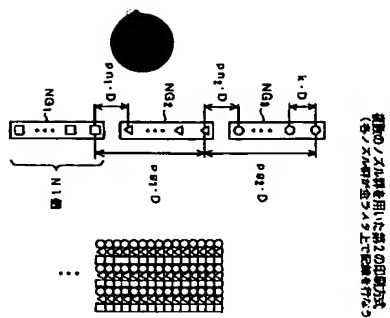


【9】

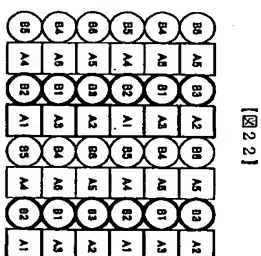
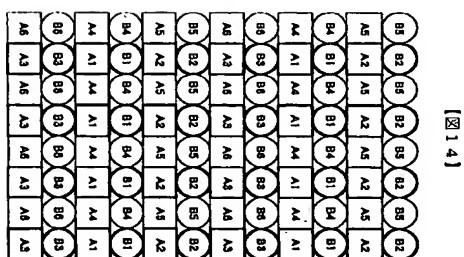
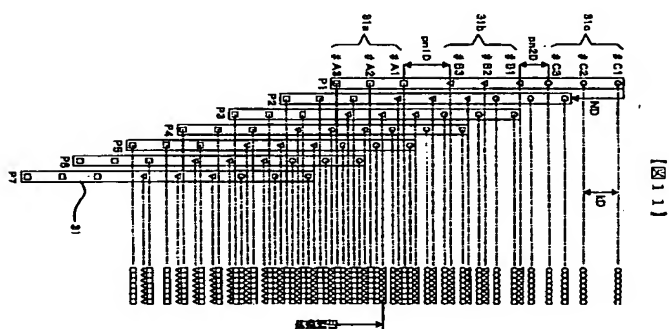
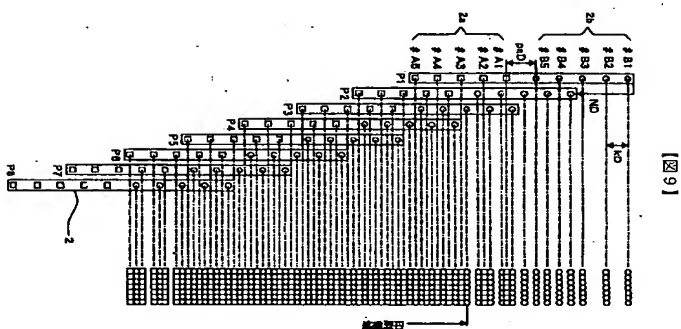
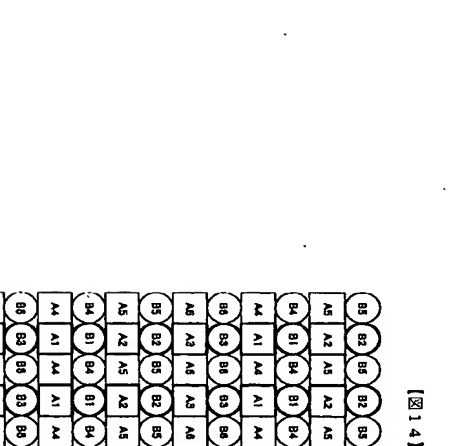
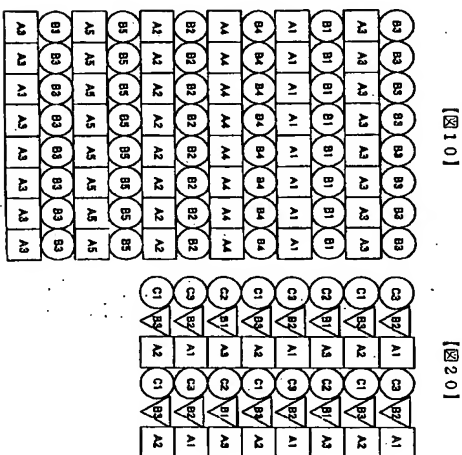
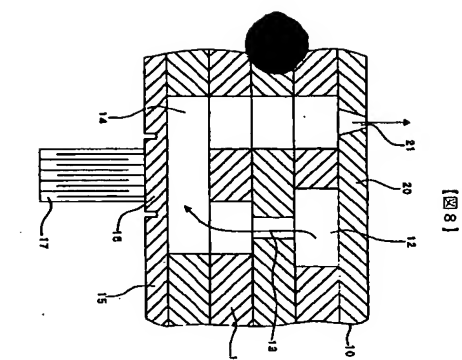
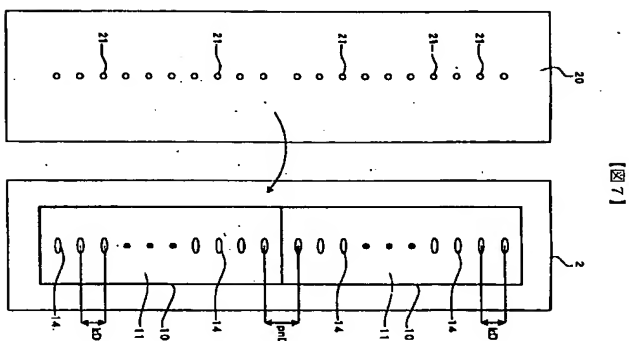


【图 18】

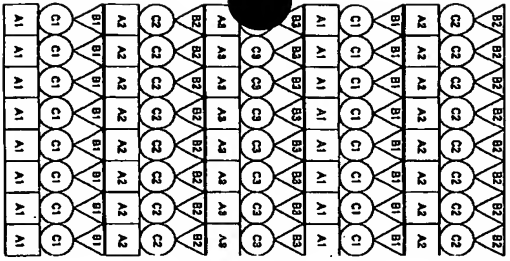
[illegible]



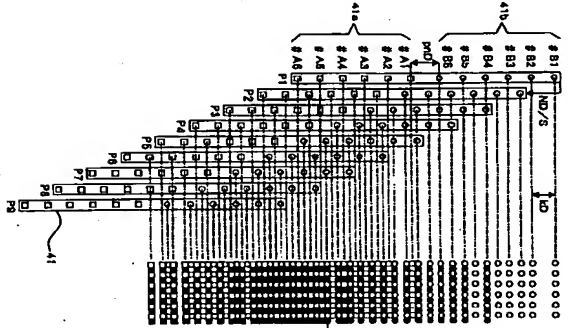
ノズル径M	2以上の整数
初期ノズル径N1	2以上の整数
最終ノズル径N	N1・M
ノズル増分ΔK	1以上の整数
KとΔとの積S	1以上の整数
2とΔとの積Pm	N/(M・S) とΔとは互いに素な数
ノズル径の増加pm	KΔの倍数



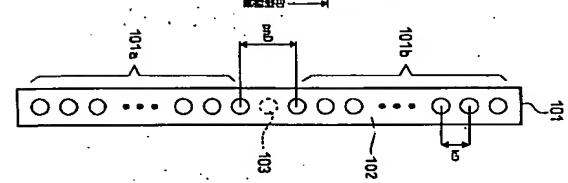
【図12】



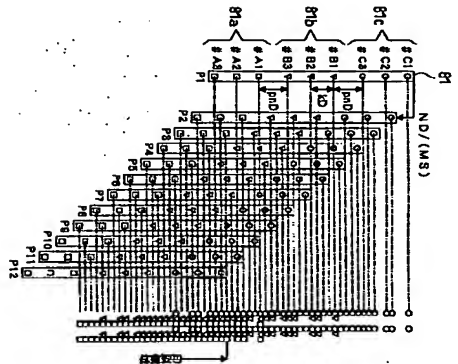
【図13】



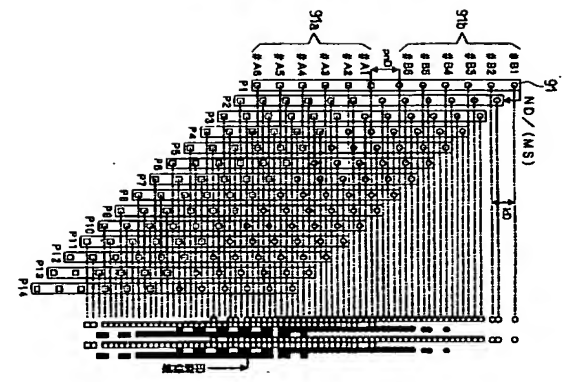
【図14】



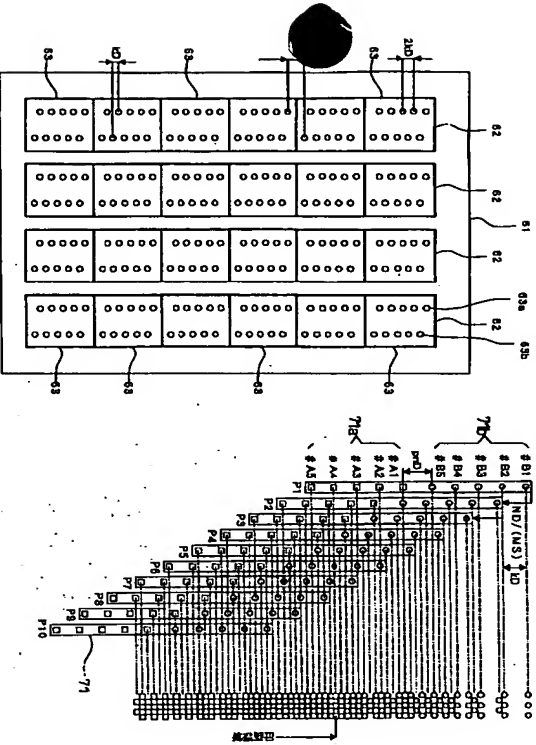
【図15】



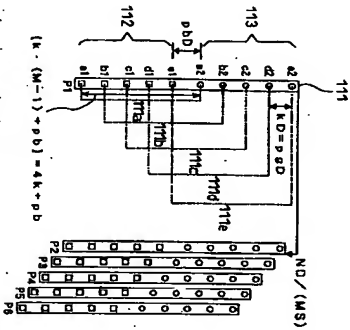
【図16】



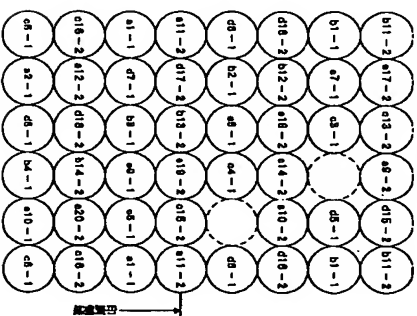
【図17】



【図18】



【図19】



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